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NOTE

'State Services' and the previous volume, 'The State as Farmer,' are published as supplements to 'Our Land,' which is suspended during the war.

STATE SERVICES

BY
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Editor of 'Our Land'

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STATE SERVICES

CHAPTER I

AGRICULTURE AND THE LAND

THERE are some facts bound up with the natural state of man which no amount of civilisation can alter much. The human being, whatever may be his status or rank, is still subject to hunger and thirst, and is dependent for comfort upon adequate conditions of shelter and warmth. Shylock and Antonio agree at least in each having certain fundamental needs. But prior even to these in a physical sense is the call for safety. The Armenian would willingly go hungry and cold for long periods if that were a cure for the Turk and the Kurd. Hence I have often pressed the point that our policy here in England was a dangerous one so far as it ignores the question of population, and allows land conditions to continue which fill our slums but devastate our valleys. It has indeed been suggested in some quarters—the kicking out of the nest theory, adopted apparently by Lord Sheffield in connection with

the soldiers, in opposition to the heavy father attitude affected by Lord Lansdowne and the rest—that these conditions peopled our colonies with the good blood driven out. But I have replied that it is the sons, not the fathers, who are expected to go to the colonies for a career; and for this purpose four sets of parents on some Scottish or Yorkshire hillside are better than the single pair still left on the old spot.

The need for safety even here has not for centuries been stated to the British people in such bald language as Germany has put it in this war. We have now before us the very alternative of the Armenian, although, thank God! we are not so helpless as that race has been. And, whether we like fighting or not, the British Empire stands as the antithesis of the German, and our Allies have whole-heartedly adopted our ideal. So that I am not urging an extravagant claim, but one of the simplest common sense, when I say that we are here at the very foundation of things—of morality and the survival of good. We are in the presence of two personalities upon which we must keep our attention fixed till the result we have in view has been obtained: the personality of the state itself as one complete organism; and that of the individual—the weakest, if you prefer it—who represents units which when summed form the state. We cannot get away now from the insistent fact that every unit counts, and is

worth the utmost attention and care. When we are all counted up the total is not large, but it is large enough to give a good account of itself when the stress comes. But more important for the world of which we form a part is the fact that we have attained a position from which we may influence that world in the right direction if we are true to ourselves. What we might do if our average efficiency were higher it would be hard to tell.

I submit, therefore, that as a people we can no longer consent to be governed by outside circumstances and the out-of-date traditions of political parties, but should begin to govern ourselves; that is, in this case, to make practical business arrangements, in the best interests of all. At present we do not realise our needs, and we can therefore scarcely be expected to make national efforts to supply them. Even from the point of view of safety our first duty is to see that this weakest individual unit is supplied with food and drink, with clothing and shelter, with opportunity and education, in order that, when the stress comes, he may help the state. I need not perhaps elaborate the point that though money and wages are the convenient standards we employ in our transactions, they are continually breaking down before the tribunal of justice on account of the remarkable variations which occur in the prices of products. By establishing a greater uniformity

in our supplies, their quantities, qualities, and price, we bring about a greater stability in wages and greater comfort in every home.

There is therefore no reason why we should not as a body of citizens take such measures that the abundance of our food and drink, their quality and reasonable price, are assured. There is no reason why our housing, and those things which go to clothe us and make our dwellings comfortable, should be taken, as they are now, out of the hands of the people and placed in those of a few among us whose interests are not identical with the general good. There has been much talk about the uses and virtues of the capitalist, of those who, according to their own saying, 'have a stake in the country'; but we shall be visited with some surprise, I believe, when we come to consider this case. The point I wish to emphasise now, however, is that since hunger and the other ills which man is heir to are a common heritage—and are not really ills if we meet them with a united and unbroken front—it is a common duty for us all as one to take up arms against this sea of troubles and by opposing end it. We may employ a certain section of our citizens to do special work for the whole; but we have no right, in justice to the weaker brethren, to sacrifice or surrender the first inherent duty of the state in these fundamentals. In many other directions, besides those already mentioned, we shall see

that the universal needs must be the care of the state itself.

I do not wish to repeat myself too often, though I believe that Erskine recommended the method, but I must do so to some extent. In a former small volume I have tried to show that agriculture can no longer be carried on safely under the policy of leaving everyone who tills the land to do simply what is right in his own eyes, and what is convenient to his own pocket, without reference to what is desirable from the point of view of the state itself. Thanks to the war, it has been generally admitted that the total bulk of produce might have a very important bearing upon the freedom of nations and empires. It scarcely needs proving that great bulk is not always the easiest or the most lucrative policy for the individual farmer to pursue. Indeed, it is a policy which *it is impossible for individualism to compass at all*; for combination and co-operation, state guidance and help are involved in the complete conversion of the powers of the soil into the products which sustain man. But even in times of peace, or perhaps I should say, even if there were no risk of war, a densely populated state like our own—densely populated but badly averaged over the area—needs a broad state policy in the interests of these dense masses, each individual of which has his own social rights. I tried to show that a steady production of milk

and eggs, of bacon and meat, of fruit, vegetables, and the great cereals, involves state guidance, state organisation, state control.

The fundamental objects which we have to place before ourselves are these. The land, whatever its position may be in respect of the towns, must be put into good heart by adequate drainage and the study of bacteria ; by due tillage and cleaning ; by just stocking, manuring, and the careful application of fertilisers. The stock must be bred by all the resources of records and the choice of the best, and to this end units of area—valleys and the like—must be placed under skilled guidance for a joint effort towards the best results. The collecting, grading, and marketing of all the products involve dairies, abattoirs, depots, and storage facilities, so that quality may be made the first essential object, and the complete use of all by-products the second. Such management involves efficient transport with all its accessories. When certain active enthusiasts, to whom I shall refer, recommend all these good things for their ex-service men, small-holding colonies and such small ventures, I would ask them as business men to consider (1) the large initial cost of such a programme ; (2) the necessity for large bulk in all the processes ; and (3) the ease with which all sorts and kinds of separate ventures can be included when once the heavy initial cost has been incurred.

There has been much talk and even resolute action with a view to the employment of more women on the land. Due attention to complete state management will solve this problem in the only proper manner. Many of us, I believe most of us, are old-fashioned enough to desire that men should perform the harder and rougher work—ploughing, attending to the horses, cattle, and sheep, minding heavy machine implements and the like—and that women should do the lighter and more delicate tasks. Now in the new activities at headquarters it is such work as women can do best that will increase. We want surplus milk to be turned into all sorts of delicious cheeses and other foods; we want the fruit and vegetables to be graded and sorted, packed, pulped, dried, and preserved; some of the cereals even may become available for other treatment than milling; and portions of the meat may be more suitable for cooking and packing than for prompt sale. The clerical work, which is of great importance, may be performed by women; the correspondence and telephoning, and all the functions of perfect cleanliness—oh! that that day might soon dawn upon all our milk supplies! The management of seeds could not be placed in better hands. For women of late years have been working upon all the problems of botany, and will patiently and with unending care help us to purify our farms from the noisome pestilence of weeds. I take this opportunity of referring to the work of

women, because I do not think that state management in any direction can succeed without their help. And I have mentioned the question of woman's assistance here because I desire to secure her co-operation early and without stint. For myself, I should afford them without the smallest anxiety all the political power that they care to take, believing that good taste and suitability will guide us all when it comes to practical work. In the early days when Lord Shaftesbury was rousing us we learnt that women were employed in disgraceful method in the mines. We are not going to allow the most ruthless among us to act in the old way; but it would be well if the minds of all of us were fixed at all times, in this era of new departures, upon the most respectful as well as valuable use of woman's help. The plough is not the place for her, although we see pictures of ploughwomen in the public prints, and read proud and glowing accounts of the wonders they perform. The women themselves, however, must and will work this interesting problem out.

I have stated elsewhere that the management of the farming in each district must fall upon the county councils. If anyone discusses such a proposition with the ordinary suburban dweller it is quite possible that he may be overwhelmed with abuse. Public management! The road-sweeper at Battersea gets 32s. a week! The workhouse is a sieve for the ratepayers' money! The Insurance

Act is . . . ! Well, let me take the suburban attitude and admit that he has something to say for himself. I have to add, however, that he cannot from his own position attack me ; he is himself to blame. The work that we have hitherto given the authorities to do has been to spend, spend, spend all the time. If an attempt is made to institute a works department we all know what happens. We are accused of wishing to turn the ratepayers' money to our own purposes. But when the celebrated poster came out, 'It's your money we want !' could it be really argued with truth then—and can it be argued now concerning myself, for instance—that the immense body of voters who favoured a works department was going to make some plunder out of it ? The fact is that the voter never sees anything but a bill for rates, and in consequence he tears his hair and denounces the whole system of local government and forgets—he hardly knows, he speaks in his haste—that he is denouncing himself and all his hard-won liberties. It never occurs to him that it would be nicer, if the state would help him, to eat butter instead of margarine, to buy eggs at 1d. instead of at 3d., to secure fine rich clean milk wherever he lives, fresh vegetables and fruit and prime meat and bacon at a reasonable price. He never even dreams of a little profit towards education, for instance, out of state land, or a balance in his favour towards rates from some works department. Is the

suburban dweller, the city clerk or departmental manager, the salesman or bank assistant, so satisfied with rents, with the price of food and clothing, coal and gas, that he will not listen to me for a moment? My sympathies are very deep for the city clerk as a citizen who suffers from almost every financial injury. If he will hearken instead of jeering I think I can bring some hope into his heart and into that of his good wife.

The city clerk, then, must correct me if I am wrong in stating that if everyone were left to do what is right in his own eyes we should have no sewers, electric or gas mains, no water; we should still be going to the common pump, and using the candle which the Zeppelin demands. The city clerk just as much as any other among us must feel that, unless we made the backward ones 'toe the line' by the power to rate the whole upon a fair system, we should be carried off by plagues of every kind. If we cannot leave sanitation and general convenience in our suburbs to the individual, why should we trust him, and ignore joint working when it comes to our food supply, our coal, our shelter from the weather, and our clothes? The city clerk just as much as the duke and the coster requires the fundamental things of life, and he is entitled to work with the rest of his fellow-citizens towards food which is good as well as cheap. To sneer and snarl at the cost of things which from the nature of the

case must be all cost, and make that very cost—though relatively small to each—an argument against a joint effort which would leave a profit to all, is unbusiness-like in the extreme. Let anyone of us attempt separately to supply the conveniences and facilities which the city clerk enjoys and he will find that Mr. Rockefeller himself could not find the cash. Why then refuse to allow this powerful thing called ‘Local Government’ to be used to secure bread and milk, butter, bacon, beef, and mutton, as well as apples, pears, currants, and all the vegetables—which now cost so much and are so poor—as good and as cheap as our water is? Individualism does not, will not, cannot feed the city clerk and his children well; the state itself, of which he is a very useful member—he has formed a large proportion of Kitchener’s Army—can do so easily, and with a profit, too, for some good national cause, or indeed for the reduction of the rates.

These city dwellers supply the great market that we want. I have explained elsewhere how it will be necessary for our various county councils to divide their areas into districts, which will be collecting units, with headquarters in some convenient spot. Each of these units, some hundreds altogether, will in effect be so many competitors for the cities’ custom; although in practice it will probably turn out that each district will attend to its own population first. But, naturally,

the rural districts must often have no large city population of their own to supply, and its managers will be able to make determined efforts to secure for their produce a welcome in every market within reach.

Can I draw a picture of these county council committees which are to compete so resolutely for the good custom of the city clerk? Let me remind the reader that the land has necessarily been taken over by the state before it begins to farm, and that all dwellers in the valley, peer and peasant alike, are tenants in it. It has therefore become the interest of all concerned that the produce of the valley should be abundant and the profits good. The present county councils already earn my sincere respect. But it cannot be said quite truthfully that they yet receive the full loyalty of their constituents. It can never be sufficiently emphasised that our local rulers are what we make them. It cannot be expected that our best men will devote their time and energies to the development of our resources, guiding our education, and serving our numerous sanitary and hygienic needs, if they do not receive the respectful support and confidence of the voters. But we may be quite sure of this remarkable fact. If we do afford the county councils the confidence and support to which they are entitled, the more difficult the problems presented to them for deliberation and for steady

and persistent effort, the more will the best people in the shires consent to stand as candidates to solve them. The very idea of farming under one scheme a valley in which are situate many historic mansions will, I am sure, interest the occupants of those mansions ; and they will consent to serve the county council upon the agricultural committee. In most of the councils there will sit beside them the leading men of some great city in the shire. To serve the people on the land by successful farming while they are helping to feed with perfect produce the thousands of city dwellers, will appeal to all patriots to the fullest extent. When the House of Lords has become an elected senate there will be very many useful members of the old House—which really had become a nuisance—who can help the state in one of its most important functions : and in detail there will be so many separate objects to accomplish that there will be room and work for all.

This has been a time for many projects from many counsellors, and I must continue my attempt to let light in upon this subject by discussing what some of them have to say upon it. In the remarks I made upon an earlier page on the subject of the heavy initial cost of complete co-operative machinery, I had in mind among others Mr. Christopher Turnor. In his lectures at the London School of Economics, and in his interesting little book, ‘ Our Food Supply ’ (Country Life), he laid

down the following 'principles of success' in our future agricultural work. The final Report of the Departmental Committee, too, discusses the question at length, though both seem almost oblivious of the fact that our system of land tenure has been accused of most of the ills with which we have to contend. This is to be the cure :

(a) Colonies of ex-service men established of sufficient size.

(b) Access to capital by means of credit banks.

(c) Co-operation encouraged from the outset.

(d) Adequate expert guidance provided.

(e) Facilities of transport to market arranged.

(f) Eventual ownership, not merely a tenancy, aimed at. And in this last Mr. Turnor seems to disagree with the committee.

By the time my words appear in print it is probable that some of these colonies will have been formed. They are to be composed of ex-service men, and they are to be planted on the land which comes into the market—1,000,000 acres a year, Mr. Turnor says—though 'it is quite possible,' he adds, 'that certain large holders would have to be disturbed.' It is a relief to find that it is not wounded but ex-service men who are to be distributed thus upon the land in colonies. 'In the case of a large and sudden demand'—Mr. Turnor need not dread it, for the committee specially *appeals for a propaganda*—'when possibly holdings would not be available immediately, the men

should be encouraged to work on the land as labourers.' Here we are once more in the presence of the agricultural labourer problem, with his wages, housing, and other difficulties. Mr. Turnor knows them only too well, for he adds, 'In almost any district *north of Peterborough* the standard wages would be high enough.'

Now suppose that from the side of the ex-service men the scheme is a success; that is, suppose the applications are numerous, and that a well-populated colony settles in one of my valley units. The land had been farmed previously, but did not succeed, for there was no co-operation, no transport, no education. Put some ex-service men on this large derelict farm—a part of the million acres which are in the market—men ignorant of the subject until six months' preliminary training and adequate expert guidance have been provided, and there we are! The magic of property is to do it all; the magic of ownership which the Departmental Committee reports against. I asked that the whole valley should be free of landlords, and Mr. Turnor frees only these new men. I asked that the whole valley should have training and expert guidance, and Mr. Turnor gives it only to the old soldiers. I asked for a big unit of co-operation and transport. 'No,' says Mr. Turnor, 'for these heroes alone.' An ordinary business man would argue that all these 'easy facilities' would be cheaper per acre for the whole area than for a colony. But the land

expert prefers to take a bite here at success and a bite there, because the land will thus remain under its old feudal tenure, 'and we can at any time buy back these acres when the thing has failed.' Limited transport, limited education, limited wages, limited co-operation, just to prevent a really wholesome national effort towards the desired end! The limited money I am coming to on a later page, but in the meantime I look with sadness on this modern Casabianca. Why should he be lost in the conflagration instead of being allowed to leave the burning deck to help us all to establish the new state work?

Mr. Turnor's lectures, however, give me an opportunity of referring to a subject that may have been misunderstood. In my former volume I used these words: 'Co-operation of a limited kind is at work in some districts; co-partnership has been tried; small holdings can be secured within limits; horses have had large sums spent upon them. . . . But where are we?' I should deeply regret it if anyone were to think that I sneer at the efforts made any more than I sneer at farms for ex-soldiers. It is in reality a desire to see such individual efforts prosper that makes me plead for the larger machinery of the state. Ex-service men's colonies would have a most honoured place in any valley, *but they cannot succeed unless they form a part of the larger business scheme.* The men in such a colony want even more than training

in farming operations. They will require to know from the business head of the district, in consultation with the scientific expert, what to grow and how to treat the things which they have grown. Six months' training will not teach them how to manage their cows and pigs and poultry as well as their arable and pasture. It is therefore of urgent and pressing importance that they should not be allowed to fritter away their labours and their hopes upon a hole-and-corner piece of philanthropic farming. But put them down in one of my new state valleys and they will have a chance.

Look, again, at limited co-partnership and co-operation. Unless a co-partnership farm can be worked into a large scheme, especially if housing is required, it runs such risks that I for one would not touch it at all. In a fully organised valley, on the other hand, it can scarcely fail, for all the danger points are outside its range. The marketing and the larger financial risks have then no bearing on the case; and 'a dissolution of partnership' need not upset more than the individual who always thinks the other person wrong. Specialities, so to speak, will be an essential and interesting feature in our future labours if we can get the first framework fixed and the machinery running. We have made a commencement in horse-breeding, thanks to Colonel Hall Walker's gift, and I need scarcely ask whether lovers of horses in the counties will object to assist in supplementing the national

effort by local ones. The best judges in the state, if they are given the opportunity, will take care that the finest breeding stock is reserved for our home and colonial needs, in spite of the valuable export trade which may arise out of, or rather increase through, the national undertaking. The army horse will not be the only one to arouse solicitude, or perhaps I should say the cavalry horse, or charger, for the army can now use probably every description of horse. I look for a friendly but brisk rivalry among the counties, in order that a local pride may be set up which will have a real market value.

So it is with all our stock. We can multiply our herds and flocks and pigs if we will apply ourselves to the task, and shall thus provide a place and occupation for those specialists upon whose technical skill so much depends. But chiefly perhaps will this idea of the colony take root among the poultry farmers, who combine enthusiasm with shrewdness in a remarkable way. This is what Mr. Edward Brown says about poultry keeping in 'Poultry Husbandry' (Arnold):

Under proper business control, poultry husbandry, in association with farming, *whether the occupation be large or small*, can be made one of the most profitable branches; and whilst women will always occupy a prominent place in relation to poultry culture, and that for many of the operations they are better qualified than men, the wider

outlook of the latter and their greater opportunities are essential factors. It is a man's and a woman's business. Each is a complement of, and a necessity to, the other.

But though a few fowls on each farm and special poultry farms here and there will require the treatment suitable to each case, they both need the commercial advantages that a state unit would afford. The due collection, grading, and storage of produce, as well as the supply of special foods and the general oversight of the expert, will add that business safety and guarantee which isolated poultry farming, however well conducted, cannot secure. Cockfighting as a profession is no more: reminiscences would be in bad taste. But the counties can still contend vigorously for precedence in this very interesting industry.

Now, is it likely that one who wishes to establish a big business venture to be run by the state—and who would welcome into it all sorts of visitors, such as ex-service men, horse-breeders, poultry farmers, co-partners, and small-holders—would begin by upsetting the valuable body of farmers who are already on the land? If my scheme should go through, I should expect that no single farmer who was willing to adapt himself to the new situation would be removed from his holding—nor his son after him—until he had absolutely proved his disloyalty or his incapacity. What I mean by these expressions will be seen more fully

when I have considered a very important pronouncement upon the subject which I have so much at heart. But I will just repeat here once more, in view of the separate panaceas for all our ills, that more important, if possible, than the large increase in all our produce which we can effect is the due organisation for the market of what we produce. We can give the city clerk five times the weight of English produce that we are doing now, and of better quality too. And we can so arrange it, if we will, that even in the neighbourhood of his own street, the goods he wants, guaranteed by all the most drastic methods—such as tracing promptly back to their origins indifferent samples—will be obtainable at a price that he can well afford to give.

The weighty pronouncement to which I have referred will be found in Mr. A. D. Hall's book, 'Agriculture after the War' (Murray). His suggestions are very far removed from mine, and yet I can hardly say that they are an attack upon them. In my optimism—which is based upon the fact that you cannot either play tricks upon or cajole science—I might almost the rather claim that if his efforts to save feudal tenure fail, Mr. Hall will adopt my proposals and help the state to carry them out as only he and his fellow-scientists can. I will not attempt, therefore, to make points merely for the sake of making them, but I will try to supplement rather than controvert.

Mr. Hall will agree with me, regarding some of his statistics, that if these islands were being blockaded the colonial crops of wheat would be just as little available as the foreign ones. He will agree with me, too, that England would not be England to us if the necessity for growing wheat became such that we, like the cattle, became stall-fed, with no meadows or uplands to wander in when we left the streets and the desks. And, once more, he will agree with me, a native of Liverpool, that the problem of providing wheat at home in larger quantities would be looked at by different citizens in different ways. Take Liverpool, then, and that great industrial district at the head of which Manchester stands. Little English wheat is ever seen there, and I question whether the population would consider with any approach to seriousness the idea which Mr. Hall reproduces from Lord Milner's Committee on Food Production. The proposal is 'to fix a standard price for wheat and to pay to the farmer for each quarter of marketable corn the amount by which the average official price for the year falls below the standard adopted. *The only new machinery required would be the attendance on due notice of an excise officer, or even a policeman, when threshing was taking place, in order to register the amount of head corn passing through the machine, for which a certificate would be given to the farmer.*' If there were risk of war and famine Liverpool would mistrust both farmer

and climate, and would consider much more favourably the appointment of some Joseph to collect and store vast quantities of grain, so that we might have in hand from all quarters of the globe a year or two's supply. The conscript fathers would preserve, and with rare skill mix the varieties ; cause them to be ground later in due order, and, if the pinch came, as wholemeal only : and they would pay for the stock with as much cotton and woollen goods—for Yorkshire would soon want to come in—as they could turn out. They would apply the same principles to meat and all sorts of preserved foods, and then wait for the worst.

Again, no one knows better than Mr. Hall that there are wheats and wheats. But the policeman can scarcely be expected to distinguish between a weak prolific thing and one which Professor Biffen may have spent a decade upon. On the other hand, there are grasses and grasses, and we should probably find under policeman rule that a good grass had been replaced by a bad wheat, rather than a bad meadow by Burgoyne's Fife. Mr. Hall thinks that the state can look with equanimity on varying qualities as long as we get wheat. I affirm respectfully, on the other hand, that we cannot ; and that we are stultifying the labours of our own experts if we do not distinguish qualities. Take a few of Mr. Hall's own passages to elucidate this very point. He says (p. 30) :

All land is more productive under the plough, and will maintain more cattle and sheep upon the crops that can be grown than upon the grass which is produced without cultivation. *It does not follow that it would be economic to plough up the old fatting pastures that are the pride of some parts of England,* or again, some of the very heavy clay pastures that are so expensive and so uncertain to work.

But who is to decide upon the fate of these pastures, for the policeman himself does not come upon the scene until the wheat is being threshed ? Mr. Hall knows only too well that he cannot trust the farmer under the present land system.

‘Much of it,’ he says again, ‘ought to be ploughed up from time to time *even if it is to carry good grass* ; when left down for many years the texture of the soil suffers, aeration becomes deficient, and the herbage grows sparse and deteriorates in quality.’ But mere ploughing, even if the farmer has the sense to do it, will not improve matters much without real oversight and guidance. If the farmer knows all about the matter why has the grass deteriorated and become sparse ?

‘From all the evidence we may conclude that the crops from land under the plough when used for feeding cattle will produce of either meat or milk more than twice as much as the same land will yield when under grass, though as a rule part of these crops are more profitably sold.’

But in my valley unit I may have from twenty to fifty acres of grass which can be made into fine pastures for the sheep and cattle, but are so placed along the slope of the valley side that ploughing is difficult and the soil liable to be washed down. And I may have but one only against them fit to plough in the lower levels beside the river. Three pounds an acre perhaps represents the rental value of this arable against ten shillings near the heather above. But these lower lands, which would plough so well and have been uniformly ploughed in earlier times, now grow grass too, instead of the rotation of wheat, barley, clover, and roots which they would carry so well. And I affirm that Mr. Hall will never get these acres ploughed until he goes from the state or the county council under a proper scheme which will deal with all the acres in the area in the best way. He may threaten, he may coax with his bonuses for arable or for wheat. Nothing but a large valley scheme will get the thing done. For Mr. Hall himself gives the reason which I have preached about these many years :

The farmer's personal profit does not coincide with the national interest, either in the direction of the production of food or in the maintenance of men upon the land ' (p. 34).

Now let all who love their country read these passages :

Many farmers are short of capital. . . .

The war has cut athwart all schemes for slow development ; the wholesale disorganisation of our social system which must ensue not only provides the excuse and opportunity for, but practically necessitates the adoption of much more rapid and drastic methods of regenerating agriculture in order to meet the double purpose of providing food and employment within these islands. . . .

An agricultural policy, in which the permanent interest of the state must be held to override the immediate interests of the existing occupiers of land, *however content they may be with the profits they derive from the present system.*'

Mr. Hall wants, as so many of us do, to get things to move on ; but can he really believe that a bonus on the acreage ploughed up from grass, or upon the wheat yielded, would put an end to slow development ? We must remember that these acres, as I have said, were once ploughed up and the wheat from them was ground upon the spot. You may see the old mills, and the old millstones set upon the threshold still. The fields were laid down to grass when the Corn Laws were abolished, almost as much in panic as from experience. The farmers feared the corn-lands on the other side of the globe, and the risk that the wheat from them might come over merely as ballast sometimes rather than as freight. I should, however, in justice say that the repeal of the Corn Laws had to bear the blame of much that was really due to the non-repeal of the

Game Laws. A bonus now will not tempt these men who work the land, nor can it make them into the farmers we are waiting for. The farming itself, war or no war, needs the adequate treatment for which Mr. Hall pleads. Stock-raising needs this straw, these roots and leguminous crops ; but the men concerned will not adapt themselves unless the state takes the matter up. Why should they ? Who is to secure for them the necessary transport under the new system ? Who is to make marketable first, and then find a market for, the produce which would flow from the new arable scheme of treatment ? Who will guarantee them against loss while working, and give them security of tenure when they have thus stood in the breach ?

For look again at some of the requirements of the times :

A proper system of book-keeping can be applied to a large farm, and becomes of the utmost value by the way it enables the direction to review results, detect mismanagement and waste, and drop unprofitable branches of the business. . . . [Suppose, Mr. Hall, that arable should disappoint them ?] Farming is not a mystery open only to those born within the craft ; it is just as susceptible of exact knowledge and hard business treatment as any other industry. If we are to believe that agriculture is outside the scope of British intelligence and organisation, the sooner we put up the national shutters the better, for that kind of mental dry rot will not be confined to agriculture. Now is the time for

experiment, when the close of the war provides the opportunity for the regeneration of all our industries on a basis of brains.

The industrialised farm of which Mr. Hall is here speaking is only another way of stating the need for a state unit under business and scientific management. No amount of brains, however, will compensate individual management for lack of co-operation, adequate transport, and large commercial handling. Brains have never had any effect upon a stone wall. Small-holding colonies, too, which are here discussed, would be much more appropriate and successful if they formed part of a large state-managed area. If the larger treatment should come through our old soldiers or any other too small effort, well and good. We do generally take the longest way round. But the land tenure itself for the whole country is not arrived at fairly by this indirect method.

In dealing with the present land system Mr. Hall gets nearer, as he is bound to do, to the essence of things.

Land in Great Britain [he says] must be expected to rise in value as time goes on, for reasons beyond the control of either owner or tenant. Little is to be gained by handing over this unearned increment from the present owner to the sitting tenant; indeed, such a creation of a dual ownership would only put new obstacles in the way of the resumption of this interest by the

state, *which has the only real title to it.* The most effective lever to secure the better farming that is now needed in the national interest would be *to give the state powers to take over any land that is being inadequately used*; the state could then develop this land on the large farm system or by settling it with small-holding colonies. . . . But if the state is to be given power to take over land that is not being fully utilised, *it must also be prepared to farm the land itself* on one or other of the methods indicated. The justification of such drastic methods is the critical situation into which the nation has drifted, and the imperative necessity of developing the production of food on our own soil, but these measures cannot be adopted *until the state is ready to manage the land itself.* . . . The landowner . . . has to become the administrator of a specialised business. . . . In the critical years of the next generation the landowners of this country and the system they represent must expect a searching and even a hostile trial; it is for the universities to enlighten them on the opportunities and the obligations that are bound up with the possession of land.

Has Mr. Hall any grounds for believing that the universities themselves are enlightened upon this commonplace business matter? 'If the light that is in thee be darkness?' If Cambridge alone would fling out a signal of revolt and freedom, I should be satisfied.

Let me quote a few more passages :

'The whole of this fundamental objection to

counties or duties *turns on the question of rent*. . . . Here is the prime difficulty attaching to either protective duties or bounties on agricultural production, that land is of unequal value and that *the owner eventually receives all the benefit*. . . . I am only aware of one method of meeting this objection — *that the state should become the universal landowner*, and so get back any increment in value brought about in one direction or other by its own action, by foreign competition, or by the growth of the community. There is nothing essentially confiscatory or unjust in such an arrangement, and it would be possible to leave to such landlords as desired to retain their leadership the power to control and develop their land. . . . English land offers opportunities as good or better than the land beyond the seas (Lord Sheffield please note); *it also can carry men if equal access is given to it*. . . . *The state must intervene to bring about progress and not decay*, and to secure that the opportunity the national crisis affords *is turned to national uses*. . . . *The state must have the arable land*, and a scheme more rapid and more equitable than the cumbrous machinery of the compulsory purchase clause.

There are three points which I want the reader to keep in mind here. The first is that Mr. Hall seems very kindly to answer his own, or rather Lord Milner's committee's, proposal for a bounty. The second is this question as to what a landowner's leadership may be. The third is compulsory purchase. The new valuation does not seem to present to Mr. Hall's mind the opportunity which

it does to mine. The usual form of compulsion I mourned over in my former book. It is too expensive for use, and it must be unjust to one or the other of the parties concerned. It is used to oust one worker in favour of another, but it alters in a very minute way the big question of landlordism. The fight for the best bit near a town—allotment and small-holder farmer and landlord all throwing their wigs upon the green—has been a very ‘pretty’ sight from the Sports’ Club point of view. Mr. Hall and I are out for a very big change in our methods of cultivation. I ask him therefore to join me in pressing still further, and with his own greater skill, the abolition of the old tenure, and to have the change made on the completion of the great valuation. Before going further I must quote some more passages to complete the case. Mr. Hall in the very difficult problem which he is attempting to solve, first in an experimental but wrong way, is compelled to press home the question of price.]

With wheat [he says] permanently at 25s. . . . and wages at 21s. . . . no available skill or organisation can keep under arable any but the choicest of British soils. . . . Rent might even be extinguished. . . . It follows from this argument that if the state, for reasons of national security and insurance against the effects of war, must obtain a larger production of food at home and greater employment upon the land, which can only be effected by an increase in the area of arable

cultivation, it cannot leave agriculture to the unrestricted play of foreign competition, but must ensure that the farmers' returns do not fall below a certain level. This takes us into the very debatable land of duties and bounties. Both may be regarded as economically unsound, in the sense that they would make the nation as a whole [my city clerk and others] pay more for the food it consumes than it would if left free to purchase in the open market that exists during times of peace. Both benefit one class of producer at the expense of the whole community of consumers, both carry with them incidental dangers, such as the encouragement of the formation of rings and trusts, the removal of the stimulus of competition, &c. . . . *Let prices be what they will, the uncertainty is almost as bad for development as actual low prices.*

These seem to me to be final arguments against private ownership, seeing that the state must have the food and the labour at 21s. a week, in its general interest. I do not myself admit that 21s. is a very brilliant thing to bring up a family upon. It may appear a whimsical way of looking at public ownership, but to leave private people to own the land, with the certainty that at regularly recurring intervals *they will be ruined by the price of wheat which must be grown*, seems 'a wicked shame.' The state must bear this burden, not force it upon the backs of 'a wretched few.' It may be replied by the landowner that he prefers it; that he has inherited a good deal of money in

the funds ; that he knows the Stock Exchange. This does not meet the case. We are anxious that the old dwellers on the land shall still dwell there, as well as 'in town.' But from the nature of the case—opposing interests, the impossibility of using the land in the way that is necessary while the finance involved is of a national rather than personal order, and the need for one expert manager over a large area—they must be there as tenants of the state. Agricultural prices after the war, even at a paying level, are not a sufficient means of promoting good farming and complete commercial handling. The extent of arable farming under a state scheme is *not* 'dependent upon the prices of produce.' The success of state farming cannot be estimated until we have marketed *all* the produce, including those articles of milk and vegetables which, as Mr. Hall points out, are naturally protected. It cannot be estimated until we have counted the number of extra families which are earning a healthy well-paid living there. And it cannot be estimated until we have computed the great national gain in self-support, in view not only of war but of our standing among the nations in this matter. Finally, it cannot be estimated until we have appraised the full meaning of free trade to us. State farming is the only possible means by which we can both grow wheat and import it, too, freely in the general interest of all.

I hope that everyone who studies the subject—it should be made compulsory—will secure Mr. Hall's work. We will give him cordially the four million acres which he wants to plough. They have long been calling out for the treatment which he recommends, because such ploughing is the central necessity of all complete farming operations. But Mr. Hall is too modest. He knows, if anyone in England does, that the ploughing of the right land—which is subjected afterwards to the right treatment and convenient and effective rotations according to soil and situation—is the crux of the whole problem. If he does not know that preaching and circularising are of no avail, no one does. I should refer him to the Board of Agriculture if I did not remember that he has so often spoken the cruel truth to the rural fraternity. The real effect of his pleading is to urge that 'the state should become the universal landowner.' Why then does he immediately add: '*It is not worth while discussing in detail so remote and controversial a proposition*'? I referred to Joseph when I spoke of Liverpool. Would he have answered Pharaoh with such a phrase? So that I dissent from Mr. Hall's opening words, and I urge that a servant of the state such as he is should press the truth upon us whether the subjects are ripe for legislative action or not. The system of tenure is the difficulty which nothing but public ownership will solve, because of these facts. Good

farming must be followed by good business organisation and transport, depots, abattoirs, and the rest. These will cost a good deal of money, and will cause the land to rise in value, especially in the remoter districts, to a wonderful extent. As a common business proposition, could anyone advise the state to enter upon such a project without settling about the freehold first? At present we should get four shillings in every pound rise, although we were spending our money freely upon an undertaking in which we could only be half-masters under some ludicrously elaborate Act of Parliament. We could not even have the face to ask these very county magnates to take a seat upon such a Board as might be set up. We should get to the level of the policeman, but no higher. Mr. Hall himself certainly could not be expected to bear a hand!

It is perhaps natural that members of Parliament should think that there is nothing like an Act of Parliament. But Mr. Roberts ('Final Report,' Part II, Cd. 8277) and his colleagues might just as well endeavour to fix the hours of postal deliveries and mail sailings by specific Acts as attempt to farm England under the present system, fettered by a minimum wage, a reclamation campaign, and a housing grant. England is in this unhappy state just now: it is to the supposed interest of those who know to be silent; those who are anxious but ignorant cannot help us to the right cure.

CHAPTER II

BANKING

HAVING taken the land, then, as my starting-point, I should like now to refer to a question which has a close connection with it as with everything else—money. If the student will be so good as to follow me into this dangerous region I will try to put the case simply to him, and I shall be grateful if he will consider the whole position with an open mind—I will not say, without prepossession or prejudice. The cost of the land having been eliminated by public ownership, the money available to the farmer in any direction will be required only for the working of the district. But we shall not need even so much as that might seem to the anxious farmer, who is better supplied perhaps with brains and vigour than he is with cash. It is interesting to know, although the fact does not cover all the problem, that in some of the larger co-operative societies £2 per farm has been found sufficient to carry through the business successfully. This co-operative finance does not attempt to deal with all the farmer's requirements,

but there is no reason at all why the new system should not cover the whole undertaking in simple fashion. For the moment I take it for granted that railways are in the hands of the state, and that motor collecting services, depots, and the rest are in those of the county councils. The farmer therefore needs his stock and implements, seeds, feeding-stuff, wages, and the like to enable him to do justice to his farm. However these may be provided in the first instance—certain things called capital being already there, for I am taking the whole area as a going concern; I am not settling soldiers on it—eventually the goods that the farmer needs will be obtained from the depot, and the farmers' business transactions throughout the whole district will be found recorded in a series of ledger accounts at headquarters. There will no doubt be required, as a mark of good faith, some deposit from the new farmer, calculated on his acreage; but he will be entitled to interest on such deposit, and it will not affect the working of his farm. And it must be remembered that the collecting services will be taking to the depot daily, and to its ledger, all those small credits for milk, eggs and poultry, fruit and green stuff which are of the essence of the national effort.

The depot, therefore, acts to some extent as banker, but for personal affairs and for the district generally, including the depot itself and the ordinary inhabitants, there will be needed a bank. And I

now urge that this great institution of banking should fall into line with the national scheme. Students of finance will observe that if my valley be large enough, and should contain populous towns with mines and local industries, it would present a financial unit of the deepest interest. But even if it were a recondite, purely rural thing, the interest would be scarcely less in observing how nearly the clearings could be equalised in the different seasons, and how far one might get towards making the harvest a *profit*, not a mere paying back of money borrowed on the strength of it.

But I do not for a moment pretend that a reformed banking system is required for agriculture and for nothing else. Indeed, I distinctly repudiate those old friends of the land reformer, land banks ; and I equally reject this new panacea, the credit bank. The present system under new conditions is quite good enough for me. But I think that if we admit the needs of the state, and then inquire into the present system, we shall see without any great perspicacity that new conditions are required.

At the same time if the student should wish to get a glimpse of this pitiable thing called a credit society he should turn to p. 19 in the Report, Cd. 8182, to which I have already referred. I wish joy to our good sailors and soldiers when they reach the open arms of the old system. The societies are formed 'under the Friendly Societies Act,' and

we all know how speedy and how generous business under that dearly loved Act is. If we happened to run a poultry farm under it, and had forgotten to set out ducks and drakes in the rules, I wonder how long we should have to wait before we had a legal right to hear the longed-for quack! The new scheme of the Board of Agriculture (1912) does not seem to have fared much better than other efforts. But the point I wish to make now is that should a labourer wish to keep a pig he does not want to borrow a few shillings and then scour the country for an animal which, after he has bought it, may or may not be of a suitable kind. He wants the pig sent to him from headquarters, with the necessary meal to supplement his own available feeding-stuff, and he wants a market at the end, or at least adequate killing and curing facilities. 'Home-cured bacon' should be sternly put down by law: the blessed words cover a multitude of evils. It is reasonable to believe, therefore, that banking as we understand it is not required at all in those numberless instances in which so much play is made concerning the lack of cash. The labourer will nestle very comfortably under our new state system; but he will give to, more than he will get from, the common fund.

But to return to banks, to the real thing. I have taken out the figures which are published by some dozen of the great joint-stock banks whose balance-sheets are framed on a plan which is

general, if not absolutely uniform in every particular. By a very rough method of average I place before the student the following figures, which I do not think would be repudiated by any of the banks as being unjust to the principles and method of management. If my average figures are just, they represent a type which has subscribers or original shareholders of two hundred million pounds.

A bank, then, whose subscribed capital is, say, thirteen millions has paid-up capital of two and a half millions, leaving ten and a half millions unpaid. In some cases there is an additional guarantee in case of bankruptcy, but this is not general. The balance-sheet will look like this :

Liabilities

Capital	£2,500,000
Reserve	1,800,000
Current and deposit accounts . . .	75,000,000
Profit, £1,120,000 ; <i>Less</i> £420,000 written off investments	700,000
	<hr/>
	£80,000,000

Assets

Cash in hand, including gold at Bank of England, money at call, &c. . .	£15,000,000
Investments	28,000,000
Advances, bills discounted, loans, &c.	36,400,000
Bank premises	600,000
	<hr/>
	£80,000,000

I am in a very fortunate position towards this average or typical balance-sheet, for, just before the time of writing, we had more than one dissertation upon banking affairs from one of its leading exponents, Sir Edward Holden, the chairman of the London City and Midland Bank. Before taking counsel with this great expert, let us see what the man in the street would make of the figures I have given. The first most obvious fact is that this typical bank has in its various tills, or at the Bank of England, or at call, nearly four times as much cash as the whole of its paid-up capital and reserve comes to. But more amazing still is the fact that it has made investments for itself,—not for its customers in any way—a stupendous sum, which reaches nearly seven times the said capital and reserve. The two items together total exactly ten times the bank's own funds. If these investments yield 4 per cent. the income from them would be £1,120,000, and £420,000 could be written off their total value in the books—a good deal of writing down has been going on—and £700,000 still remain to distribute to the shareholders. This sum represents 28 per cent. on the original paid-up capital, or more than 5 per cent. on called and uncalled capital alike. I might just note that the above facts take away any necessity which there might be for making a profit on the bank's daily transactions in and out.

As regards the uncalled capital it is to be noted that the present owners need not, and we may take it for granted do not, represent the original subscribers. In view of the importance of this uncalled capital in a crisis such as we have passed through, this transfer is important too ; for though the original shareholders were, almost from the nature of the case, wealthy and influential, there is no reason to believe that all the sales of shares have been made to equally substantial persons. Indeed, it is quite possible that this fact represents a very questionable feature in banking finance. For in the typical case I have given I may perhaps take the number of shareholders to be somewhere about 20,000. Every holder of £125, the average of each holding, who has already paid perhaps £500 for his share, will have to find £525 more if the balance were called up when the crash came. And this at a time of crisis would be no easy matter, for all available cash is probably then already in the banks.

There are two other items which I will just refer to before quoting Sir Edward Holden. Current, deposit, and other accounts come to £75,000,000, and advances, bills discounted, and loans on the other side reach less than half that amount, £36,400,000 ; hence a sum no less than £38,600,000 of the money paid in from the outside goes to carry through those other functions of the bank to which I have alluded.

Now, upon the examination of figures such as these most of us would say with the Prince : ‘ O monstrous ! but one half-pennyworth of capital to this intolerable deal of loan ! ’ But Sir Edward looks at the matter in a different light. Without even referring to any small commission which might stick to the bank’s fingers in the process, he said at the ‘ Cecil ’ (after reminding his audience that *the joint-stock banks had the responsibility of directly or indirectly providing the resources necessary to carry on this war* and also of financing the industrial interests of the country) that

‘ up to now banking had been absolutely free in this country. What had been the consequence ? The operations of both the old and the new private banks and the old and the new joint-stock banks had placed the finances of this country on a higher pinnacle than those of any other country. Not only before this war was this country the financial centre of the whole world, but it was so to-day, and he hoped we would continue to maintain that position, which was the envy of every other important country—a position which had been made by the freedom of the banks. If this Association [Chambers of Commerce] could induce any authority to shackle the banking system on the lines of some of the resolutions which appeared on their agenda paper, they would begin to damage our own banking interests and hurt the industrial interests in which this Association was directly concerned, because anything in the nature of restriction would

prevent the bankers *giving that accommodation* which they gave now.'

'Accommodated,' said Mr. Bardolph, interrupting in his usual style, 'that is, when a man is, as they say, accommodated ; or when a man is, being, whereby he may be thought to be accommodated ; which is an excellent thing.'

'The present banking system,' said Sir Edward, ignoring the interruption, 'meant borrowing with the right hand and lending with the left. In other words, it was the business of the banker to defend the interests of the shareholders, of the depositors, and of those who carried on the industries of this country. Hence his advances should be made with judgment and wisdom, and, as a fact, they were. In considering our banking operations it was necessary that we should remember that we were a comparatively small country, and that our banks had to work on a smaller area of population than our foreign banking competitors. Bearing this in mind, and supposing that we had followed the venturesome banking policy which some people advocated, and lent more and larger sums to industries than we had been in the habit of doing, where should we have been to-day ? Where should we have obtained the money to finance this war ? The bankers would have had to call in their loans, and how would the business community have liked that ? It would have ruined half the industries of the country. So far from their having been compelled to adopt that drastic course, *our bankers had been able to meet the demands necessary for financing this war without turning a hair.*'

To the ordinary citizen, who examines the accounts and hears Sir Edward's admission that he borrows with one hand and lends with the other, it is amusing to remember—at least it would be amusing if the risk had not been so terrible—that the banks had nothing to do with the financing of the war except as a machine which would have broken down and caused widespread distress *but for the interposition of the state itself.*

So let me turn to the Cannon Street speech to the constituents of the bank of which he is chairman. I want to show what this doyen of the banking fraternity has to say of Mr. Lloyd George and those state financiers who saved us from ruin at the time.

I cannot conclude my speech [he said] without making some observations with regard to the War Loans issued in this country, and, if I may be allowed to say so, *I scarcely think we have approached this question in the broad and comprehensive manner that we might have done.* I believe there is no class of investor in the world more patriotic than the British. . . . Nevertheless, I believe it to be absolutely necessary for *a wider view* to be taken by the Government of the financing of the war than is involved in the mere question of securing cheap terms for the British taxpayer. This is a matter in which it is vital that we should take not only *a broad view*, but *a long view*, and I do not hesitate to assert that, in the long run, an infinitely more important matter even than the

amount of interest paid out annually by the Exchequer, is that the resources of the country, as expressed in securities, should be as liquid as possible, and that our national credit, as expressed in the price of our securities, should be at a premium and not at a discount. But this can only be accomplished if the Treasury looks the facts in the face, and places its loans on terms and conditions ensuring the freest marketability even during the times of war and the maintenance of price after the war. Moreover, the Government must remember that it cannot be a good thing that this wealth should stand at a discount. I plead, therefore, now with the Government that they should take no narrow or short-sighted view of this matter, but should remember that *it is essential that the investor should not be driven into foreign securities for high yields of interest.* With the exception of this country, every nation has not hesitated to *fling aside altogether the Income Tax on its War Loans.* Let us have an end once and for all to *British capital being driven abroad into foreign countries* because of an undue penalising of capital at home, whether in British industries or in British Government stock itself.

Briefly, therefore, *the Government must see to it* in all its future loan operations that while prudently conducted from the standpoint of the Exchequer, *the still more vital consideration is kept in mind of ensuring that the national wealth, as represented in Government securities, shall tend to appreciate,* rather than depreciate, and that when the war comes to an end, the conditions shall be such as to retain British capital within the country

and not to cause it to be unduly attracted abroad until such time as the balance of trade is once again overwhelmingly in our favour. . . . If, coupled with this policy, we also concentrate our attention more upon the possibilities of home production, the present difficult times through which we are passing will prove to be merely an interlude, the forerunner of even more prosperous times than the country has ever enjoyed in the past. *But these conditions will not arise if a narrow view is taken now by our Finance Minister of what is involved in the true conduct of the finances of this great country.*

This is perhaps the most unblushing piece of assurance, founded upon a short memory, that has ever been put forth from such a responsible position. The figures which I have given would be emphasised if I were to take those of the bank of which Sir Edward Holden is chairman. There the capital paid up is £4,780,792, 10s. ; the reserve, £4,000,000 ; but the current, deposit, and other accounts reach the vast total of £147,750,702, 0s. 6d., whatever Mr. Mantilini might say about the sixpence. The advances are nearly 66 millions. When the war broke out we know that everyone looked at his neighbour in respect of those large sums which were invested out of England and the Empire, those poor persecuted sums which had been 'driven into foreign securities for high yields of interest.' We know also what happened during those few days in which the state was compelled

to act. We know that but for the action of the Government which is now being lectured, the representatives of those current and deposit accounts would have had a very bad time, and those ill-fated persons who had received 'accommodation' to the extent of these 66 millions would have had a worse. Their securities—where would they have gone? Their businesses—what would have become of them? And yet—the people as one united whole, led by its Ministers, having stood in at this dread financial crisis—'a wider view,' forsooth, 'is to be taken by the Government of the financing of the war'!

May I use the figures in the London City and Midland once more as typical? If I were to take only those dozen banks which have been bringing about amalgamations so vigorously of late years, the student and the man in the street would equally be interested to observe that, taking their paid-up capital of 200 millions as being at stake at that time, and using the relative figures quoted above, there was at the same moment at stake—'borrowed,' as Sir Edward puts it, 'with his right hand' from the poor British taxpayer, whose interests under 'the wider view' should not be too closely watched—6000 million pounds!

Now why does the British taxpayer continue to go on in this far from satisfactory manner? Will he be patient with me if I try to explore this country which should be so useful to us all?

I do not wish to belittle the value of good red gold by any means, and will speak of the currency problem later. But it is within the knowledge of everyone that the bulk of business, indeed the bulk of ordinary monetary dealings, is performed by cheques. What I may call the more intensive kind of financial work is carried through by acceptances or bills. I do not think that the use of gold, silver, and notes together reaches 1 per cent. of the money turned over in our total transactions. Indeed, 100 millions in gold against 16,000 millions at the clearing-house would be nearer the fact. Notes have little bearing on this point; they are purely a convenience. The simplicity of the method, the accuracy and the safety of it, for the pass-book acts as a superb auditor, make *coin* transactions—I was going to say *cash* transactions, but the word is used for cheques now as well as for gold and silver—quite a nuisance to the business man. Some of the old pilgrimages with the god gold in a bag are now quite out of date. The first ‘accommodation,’ then, which the ordinary business man wants is some simple means of clearing cheques and bills day by day. The matter is quite a simple one, a piece of clerical routine, and looked at by itself would be more appropriate to a confidential state organisation than to a congeries of private capitalists. I should not desire to reduce, but rather to increase, the real conveniences and

facilities of banking. But it is only too obvious that there can be no *public* interest served by having a series of competing banks side by side or face to face in any street. The reduction of the figure 'bank premises' in towns like London would enable the same item to be increased in districts which are ill-supplied. One simple national Bank of England would discharge this function of 'clearing' the daily debits and credits of us all admirably in every way.

Let us consider this point of deposit and current balances lying in the banks. We are here in the presence of a vast question of probabilities, for by no kind of estimate, prevision, or caution can the idea of paying and being paid in gold enter into any conceivable plan. The thing is analogous to the problem of the insurance societies and their actuarial estimates. There is this fact to be noted also. In actual practice many accounts are on one date to be found among the 'current accounts,' and on another among the 'advances.' But in the position which we are considering these details do not matter. The underlying fact is that a certain sum, such as this 147 millions, may be found in the various branches of the banks standing to the credit of various persons. If the total of all these banking credit balances—shall we call it 10,000 millions at a guess when the English banks alone are added up?—were in the hands of the state bank, very much more could

be made of the fact than can be made under the present system. Now the directors have to make their own guesses, and must place a set of different sums into a set of different investments. And, consequent upon this, huge sums have to be placed to reserve, and other sums are consequently and constantly being written off the item of investments ; and we must remember that these operations take place in the time of the dry tree ; when it is green appreciations generally go to swell the market price by increasing dividends. Owing to our present system of Stock Exchange finance investments are eternally going up or down and every bank parlour becomes an inner betting ring. It has even been said by some that banks are not without a guilty share in bull and bear operations. The item of consols (which, it would be thought, would have as a national security an unvarying value) has fluctuated since 1888 in a way which has had an almost immoral influence on the citizen. This fluctuation trustees have had to face, and their beneficiaries have had to suffer from. In the past the law confined trustee investments to certain securities, and then, without making any attempt to break the fall of these artificially favoured securities, coolly relaxed its rigour and allowed widow and orphan to take their chance. One would have thought that a state free from Stock Exchange influence would have broken the perpetuity of the old consols when it was taking

a line which must destroy their artificial value. If the history of the bankruptcy of some very useful institutions were written, it is probable that the dismal drop in the state's own funds would often be found to blame. And this fact should make us all as citizens ashamed. One of the first actions, therefore, of a reformed financial system must surely be to limit issues of this nature to, say, twenty years, or at least to revise the rate of dividend after such limited period, so that investors may have a reasonable chance of keeping their original capital intact. Sir Edward harps upon the fact of the depreciation of consols, but I see no suggestion in his speech that the common-sense and just method of short periods to the loans, or rather to the rates of interest, should be applied to the case.

Those who among our learned financiers are able to look dispassionately at this deeply interesting problem will, I think, admit that this curious total of 10,000 millions would be better for several reasons in a national bank than in a large but dwindling number of private corporations. Nothing but the state itself can face adequately the necessity of both investing the money and yet having it ready for all calls upon it. If the matter were probed by those who are our responsible guides in state finance, it is probable that we might as a people get through many of our financial difficulties by merely acting upon the

rule of chance, or of the probable, as our bankers have been doing. Upon their system probably some 3000 millions out of the 10,000 might be well invested in Government securities, many times the value of the old consols. The fundamental fact admits of no denial. The private corporation, however it may amalgamate and invest, compete and save reserves, can never in any sense approach the simplicity, security, and cheapness of a national organisation. In a certain sense the anxieties and calculations and caution in those things which we have discussed are absent from the national undertaking. The clerical and routine work of the banking staff, without forethought or care, brings about by its simple revolution the valuable fact of a vast total of the citizen's money lying in the state's own tills. This is only the beginning of the most interesting work of a state bank; for we have another 7000 millions to occupy us: but so far it is a most beneficent fact, and one which the state ought to use wisely and well, for it inheres to it, and to it alone, because of its own marvellous personality as the guardian of us all.

In a rough way we may take the 'advances' to be about half of these current and deposit accounts, or 5000 millions, if we are to do something like the work under this head that the banks do. Bill discounting forms a very large part of this, and there is no reason why anything essential

should be changed in regard to it. The present banks are just as anxious to secure, or rather to confine their advances to, good names as the state would be ; and as these banks all run to the state when they are in trouble under this very head, it is difficult to conceive how any objection could arise to the continuance of the system.

The matter upon which there has been so much discussion is of another order, although it concerns advances. I am in all these figures treating them as British, indeed as English, for the time being. And I may take it for convenience that this other system of advancing money is by an overdraft upon security. It is here that much of the worry, anxiety, and uncertainty of bankers arises. The blessed word ' liquid ' describes what they all aim at in the securities upon which a loan or overdraft is arranged. Goods such as wheat, cotton, wool, and iron raise questions of local interest in addition to the general one which affects our seaports and industrial areas. The managers need to be conversant with local conditions as well as with local men ; but I think I may claim that every interest would gain by, and there would be no drawbacks of a genuine kind to, such advances being given by a state bank rather than by private organisations. Our exports and our imports touch so directly upon national and imperial interests that a state bank and its accounts impinge upon the very largest political

and diplomatic questions. Grave difficulties arise if the general trend of these financial matters is not within easy grasp of the Government. The trust question which Mr. Hall referred to is already giving great anxiety to it. In the coming days we shall all have to feel a keener interest in those separate responsibilities which groups of our citizens are undertaking for us. The only way to remove such interest from the arena of party strife is to involve the state in them by genuine state assistance where it is required. I shall have to ask the reader to return with me to this subject on a later page.

The difficulty with banks is to give advances upon securities which are good but are not liquid. Property of various kinds, machinery, goods which have not a regular sale and market, small concerns whose shares are not 'quoted,' are the difficulty; and it is just here that agitations are arising in view of the trade combat of the future with Germany. But it is just here where the best social policy would bear fruit. Land is at present a drug in the banking market: no bank director wants to see securities of such a nature even if the signatures on them were affixed at the same time as those on Magna Carta. Poor Barnaby Bright who wants a little 'accommodation' on his bit of land cannot get it even to buy sulphate of ammonia upon Lord Selborne's recommendation. And in the old Craven Bank district, where they loved the local note with

the pictured cow, *appeal must now be made to Liverpool* in case of difficulty. Can we wonder if managers who have to deal with such business err always on the safe side ?

The result is that land is practically valueless as a means of obtaining money for ordinary business, and if there were no other reason for public ownership we should find a sufficient one here. When land is exchanged for land stock the facilities for borrowing will be placed upon an altogether different plane. But such borrowing should be removed from the vagaries of managerial caprice, directors' dicta, and distant negotiations, and be placed in the hands of the state bank in the locality, but under large general principles laid down by the Treasury itself.

I have referred to amalgamations, their bearing upon management, and their paralysing influence upon the difficult, and therefore generally the most pressing, cases. The little man in difficulties needs more care and solicitude just because he has no helper than that raucous speculator who can threaten half the banks in town. The state can and will provide facilities for him and ease his anxious heart ; but it is not going to saddle itself with all such difficult cases and leave the easy running turnovers to private organisations. I have touched upon these amalgamations to show that this series of operations has in reality exposed the need for a larger handling in this matter. The

Chambers of Commerce which Sir Edward Holden addressed were pressing some scheme of the old kind, although their meeting was called to discuss the mischief already wrought by them.

Coming to the question of industries [he said], not only in this country but throughout the world, the present-day movement was all in favour of enlarged operations—more capital, greater resources, bigger turnover, and bigger profits. In the United States, notably, the movement was all in the direction of the smaller concerns being linked up with the bigger concerns, with the view of utilising greater resources and producing greater results. In Germany they had been doing the same thing, and if we were to keep up with the rest of the world we in this country must do the same thing. If the men engaged in the industries of this country did not pursue the same policy as their foreign competitors, they would be left behind in the race. This country used to get along with small banks, but it could not get along with them now. The whole world-movement was in the direction of larger and still larger concerns, because thereby they could work at a cheaper rate, and that principle applied to banking as well as to other enterprises. Speaking from his own forty to fifty years' banking experience and from his knowledge of the experience of his banking friends, he was prepared to assert that banking competition was never so great as it was to-day. There was no banking ring in this country. He personally had always set his face against a ring in banking. We must have free

competition. The result of that competition had been all to the good of industry and enterprise.

We may all readily see how the matter stands. We may keep on amalgamating, if we avoid the last step ! We may keep on competing, if we avoid the error of complete co-operation ! The United States can give us all a lead, but we shall never hear through Sir Edward Holden, I fear, the other side of that 'linking up' of the small men. Meantime we are learning from our own banks some of the truths, and they have only themselves to blame if the momentum of their own action carries us through to the one amalgamated state bank.

Lloyds Bank, to take just one instance, gives in its report a very interesting list of the banks it has absorbed during the past years. This history of absorptions commences in 1865, and ends for the time being in 1914. There are forty-seven names in the list beside the original Lloyds & Co. In addition to the Midlands and London, the names take us from Devon and Cornwall, Wilts and Dorset, to Newcastle ; from Margate to Chester ; from Cardiff to Liverpool, Manchester, and Leeds. It is probable that this little history represents something like the histories of the other great institutions ; but whether this be the case or not, the fact is fairly obvious that England is parcelled out among a few great banks which are shrewd enough to insist still, as in the passage just quoted

from Sir Edward Holden's speech, upon the virtues of competition. I venture to hazard the statement that competition is here a misnomer. The managers of these powerful bodies could all pass a searching examination upon the principles of banking which are common to them all, and it is for the citizens of the state now to consider whether the great institution of banking under its present conditions is doing all the useful work it can for agriculture and mining, trade and industry, shipping and investments towards national thrift. I submit that banking has now become so universal, and that state possibilities are so great in connection with it, that it is no longer possible to leave it in private hands. If everyone claimed the benefits of co-operation or co-partnership in the undertakings which they use, we should be faced by a multitude of doubtful ventures: but if we all used a state bank we should all be co-operating, we should all be co-partners; we should be carrying out to its logical conclusion the policy of the banks themselves, and saving them from the terrible risks which overtake the strongest of them—though their size is here no proof of real strength in the financial sense—at a crisis like the present. The old lady of Threadneedle Street really nationalised is the proper financial mother of us all.

I have referred to the smallness of the original capital upon which large dividends are being paid, but I do not wish to mislead anyone on such a

point. Many of these original investments of capital are longstanding, and of course, with such dividends as are being paid, the shares sell at a price far above the nominal one. But in a crisis this does not matter. The question then is—where is the bank's money; are we likely to get in the uncalled capital and to sell the unissued shares? We might succeed: but to rescue a mined or torpedoed crew in a blizzard would be the easier task. Again, as I have asked before, are the present shareholders likely to be as strong as the original ones? But whatever be the answer to such inquiries, there is no question but that a fair and just price must be paid for the shares to their present owners, whoever they may be?

Returning, then, to the subject of advances, from which I was led by the blessed word amalgamations, it will be admitted, even by Sir Edward Holden himself, that the objections to lending money upon land and buildings, upon mines and similar undertakings, will disappear just so far as we can present these things in the form of national and local funds. The railways are at present in a state midway. But they will appear in a fairer financial light when they are offered to the investor as one state service rather than as a number of private competing ones. And, if I have my way, every one of such state services shall have the interest question reconsidered at least four or five times in the course of a century, in

order that betting upon them may be discouraged and the capital invested by the various citizens preserved for them intact.

But it is unquestionable that banks have lent money upon securities from time to time that were not liquid. Seeing that they have done this dangerous thing with other people's money upon their own admission and their own published accounts, something might be said for a stricter Government oversight in all such matters. In all our great crises it has been said too late that nothing would have gone wrong if bankers had not exceeded their proper functions. 'Accommodation Bills,' or lending upon nothing ; huge advances to worthless foreign governments ; bricks and mortar ; plunging in corn, cotton, wool, or the South Sea at large ; throwing good money after bad ; lending upon these very things which we have been discussing—land, mines, machinery—and those other speculative undertakings which under the present system often mean ruin. Lending to the speculator, too, has had its victims, and the banks as a management richly deserved the losses they got, for that terrible word 'margin' is the name of a ship 'built in the eclipse and rigged with curses dark.'

How, then, is our state bank to help trade and industry if it would avoid the pitfalls of the old régime ? Of course if land, mines, railways, and public-houses are nationalised, their stock becomes good banking security such as we require, and we

have simplified our problem from the start. But, leaving these, the first thing a state bank could do would be to 'differentiate freely,' as the professor said, and to teach its customers to do so. If a man or a firm wants to lend money to a Mexican chief it is just as well to separate his account from the ordinary work of supplying Bradford with wool or silk, or Manchester with cotton. And it is desirable, too, that the Prime Minister and Foreign Secretary should be made aware of such transactions, lest they interfere with friendly relations somewhere: Alabamas should not be financed as if they were part of our peaceful avocations; we have had enough of disguises, war as peace and enemy as friend. The whole of our foreign finance requires to be put upon such a footing that it is not mixed up indiscriminately with home affairs. But more of this when we come to gold. The question here is how the bank is to help trade and manufacture when the securities these offer are not banking securities? The solution seems to lie in the direction of the local authorities, whose interest it is to foster industry in their own districts. If urban or county councils could institute a method of what I might call county debentures guaranteed by them, and which the various manufactures could make part of their local issues when forming companies, the state might safely lend money on them to ease the pressure. There is little doubt but that if these authorities began to

assist their own citizens in this way, opportunities would arise for establishing local factories of a most interesting kind. A speciality in clay or iron, copper or tin, slate, zinc, or lead might be set up; a local reputation common to all citizens in the area might be achieved which would bring money into the town and district which perchance languished under individualism. We can buy, or could, works of ceramic art in Germany and France from the factories of the state. Why should not the Potteries, if they desire to do so, establish some such state-aided and guided institution which the ordinary trading fraternity has not had the courage or the cash to develop? However this may be, if banking in its true and genuine functions, which are the only safe ones, is to help trade and industry by the provision of cash or credit, it must be under the guarantee of the local authority. I take for granted that pure individualism is not ready with its cash, for it is applying to the state for banking facilities which are at present considered inadequate. [What certain 'associations' have the face to ask the state to do we shall see when we come to sulphate of ammonia.] The local authority is the state in its practical home-rule efficiency. Let this disgraceful veto be removed from its trading activities, and the citizens in each centre of industry can then decide for themselves what facilities are to be given to their energetic members. These facilities need not be confined to money-lending: all the common needs

of the community can be attended to, and the rates will either bear the charge for a general benefit or reap the profit of successful trading. Technical education is probably the first and most necessary charge upon an area which desires to produce for itself what Germany has hitherto sent it. Then will follow experimental laboratories and trained teachers, as well as the group of highly gifted scientific men and women who explore the mysteries of nature for their own sake. Personally, I believe that a genuine factory turning out goods of the most perfect kind for sale is the final touch that ought to be given to such educational work. It becomes both a test of efficiency and a demonstration of it. I desire to speak of this on a later page. All I need add here is that all the states in the world cannot combine to make money by a mere wave of the hand. Industries can only be helped in the ordinary channels : an unsound venture is unsound whether it be run on a barrow in the street, or carried out by Overend and Gurney, or the Glasgow Bank. On unsaleable stock or fixtures, especially upon the same which no longer form part of 'going concerns,' the bank which advances money locks it up, and no amount of argument will release it either to an individual, a municipality, or to the state. The question only remains : if money is to be sunk upon a good local risk, who is to find it ? If individuals are unequal to the task the recourse is naturally to the municipal authority, which is already by its paternal position involved in every-

thing which concerns its people. If the undertaking is too large for such local effort the final remedy is with the state, but we must for safety go gradually in all such matters, and learn from the larger services the secret of how communities work best.

Let me take the case of a small town, as I have taken a little valley previously. If land should become public property, the present owners have released to them immediately 'liquid' securities to the value of the freehold. Now there are on this land buildings of all kinds which have cost large sums, and have a rateable value, but are not liquid by any means, quite the reverse. But if every building as it arose had placed upon it a certain debenture value, which could be treated as definite local stock, a still further sum of money would be released for use either by the owner or his fellow-citizens. Compare the safety and convenience of such a simple system with the present method of applying to a bank, paying two solicitors, and in the end perhaps getting either the bank or yourself, or both, into financial trouble.

The problem of machinery and such subsequent calls for capital might also be undertaken in some manner similar to the buildings, but requiring the additional guarantee of the trade itself in the town concerned. Such underwriting would be forthcoming if by such means an additional security became liquid for general convenience.

The problem of banking involves that of circulation, currency, or, in a shorter and final word, gold. It is curious that in these days of money investigations, some students seem to belittle, almost to ridicule, this article gold. Gold is at present despised because it bears so small a relation to our total business, but it has always had this relatively small size towards corn-fields, mines, and the harvest of the sea ; nor is it the only small thing which has a special and peculiar value in the world. It is a commodity which did not reach its present position of usefulness at once in the history of the world's tradings, but it has for a long time now been considered the most convenient *standard* of relative values. When we see pictures of a train of motors carrying ten millions of British gold to the United States Treasury we cannot help feeling how much more convenient ten Bank of England notes for a million each would have been. But gold has been a convenience in relative values rather than in ease of transport, for we have not yet found anything which is at once more precious and more convenient for small transactions in exchange. Our dealings are getting too big for gold to be quite convenient in them all. The fundamental fact is that gold is itself a commodity, and has been found useful in arriving at the relative values of other commodities. But we ought never to forget that gold itself varies like other things, and we might just as truly say that five pounds in

gold cost a certain number of bushels of wheat as that a certain number of bushels of wheat cost five pounds. The inconvenience of carrying much gold has caused us to issue notes instead of it, treating such notes in reality as orders for, or as certificates that you are keeping for the holder of them, the amount stated of gold. The trade we do with each other is not essentially concerned with gold except, as I have said, as settling the rate ; it is in houses and lands, in 'corn and oil and wine.' The things which we live upon are thus distributed ; and, as we are finding to-day in actual experience, we can carry through all our varied businesses without the aid of a single sovereign in gold. Each one that reaches the many banks at present is kept a prisoner and interned in *the* Bank. And in the great panics of the past, when gold was hunted for, it was not to use, but merely, as has been said, 'to hide.' We know then from experience that it is possible to carry through the almost infinite activities of a state without reverting to the actual use of the standard itself ; without, so to speak, re-measuring the actual foot, or weighing the legal authorised pound. But when a state has to keep its accounts adjusted with other states this international commodity reappears. For prompt cash payments gold is the ultimate test. But even here the inconveniences are so great that every possibility is tried to avoid that final but awkward necessity, the transport of gold. Rather than go

through what in these days looks almost like the farce of gold-laden motors, securities of all kinds are sought out and sold by Britons to the United States or whatever nation the creditor may be.

These are the vast but crude problems which come up for solution in the difficult financial times of war. But they present a simple illustration of what is going on all the time in periods of peace. Gold has become the final instrument for settling the small balances of exchange. In normal times these gold movements are reduced still further by the working of the clearing-house principle in international finance, so that ultimately the transfer of gold may be described as small. It is obvious, too, that it is a great gain to have, as at present, all our stock of gold in one till, in order that all movements, or attempted or risk of movements, may be watched and provided against in one central bureau. Is not this the crowning fact that should induce us now, even while the war is upon us, to simplify all our English banking establishments into one state bank, the real Bank of England? We should do this in order that, after the solvency of the banks has been made synonymous with the nation's safety, the common and clerical work of commercial and industrial life may be simply carried on; that all the citizens' credits may afford the greatest service possible both to themselves and to the state; that advances may be made upon one uniform system, and non-liquid securities

taken only upon the guarantee of the local authority; that foreign business may be carefully watched and managed by a special staff upon definite rules; that our stock of gold may be centralised and used only for its proper purposes, the definition of a standard and the regulation of foreign exchange.

In Andréadès' 'A History of the Bank of England' (F. S. King) this passage occurs :

At the Bank of England the notes cashed by the issue department are never returned into circulation—a *practice contrary to that adopted by most European banks*. Such notes are first cancelled and then, after they have been submitted to the test of a special system of book-keeping, they are put away in the strong boxes, where they remain for seven years before being destroyed.

The number of notes cashed each day varies roughly from 25,000 to 60,000. It has been calculated that the average time during which each note stays in circulation is 70 days for £5 notes, 58 days for £10 notes, 27 days for £20, £50, and £100 notes, 9 days for £200, £300, and £500 notes, and 7 days only for £1000 notes.

I called at the Issue Department to inquire whether this passage was still true, but the only fact I really learnt was that the Bank does not even admit that it was ever true. I am therefore compelled to refer to the subject in a hypothetical way. It is, however, 'common knowledge' that

bank-notes are not re-issued, and one may take it for granted that Professor Andréadès had good grounds for guessing as he has done. Of course the cost of a note for £1000 is not necessarily more than that of one for £5, and the chance that something approaching one million pounds a day may be treated to strong boxes and destruction has no particular bearing on the case. But that some 40,000 sheets of very valuable paper a day—printed, or rather engraved, in the most perfect manner, checked and counter-checked, booked in and out, and stored with infinite precautions—or more than 80 millions in the seven years, should be destroyed on account of something resembling a whim is a matter of great importance. There are two opposite, concrete facts which bear on the question; the £1000 note and one for 10s. at the same time. The £1000 note after a seven days' run cannot have depreciated in the matter of cleanliness very much; but if it is too much injured for human nature's daily use what are we to say about our 10s. Treasury note? Now, it is not easy to cajole either Mr. Asquith or Mr. McKenna, and I can scarcely think that the use of the Bank of England by the Government is continued because anyone believes that the state is saved this intolerable waste which it would be obliged to incur if we managed our own concerns. The tradition is on a par with the ridiculous idea that in these days when we borrow 100 millions

every few weeks from the people we need 'the accommodation' of less than 20 millions from 'the Bank.' I wish no ill to the Bank of England—quite the reverse, as I have said above—or to any other bank; but the time has come for a fundamental change in ownership and in the carrying through of national objects by simple means. To cause this great cost to adhere to the elaboration of a thing which was used partly to save the wearing away of gold, is itself a satire on our practical minds. Notes are used for legitimate purposes as well as for childish ones; but if their use necessitates the exorbitant expense and trouble of the present system, that use can and should be restricted, simplified, and cheapened, and the whole system of issue should be changed.

CHAPTER III

COAL

THE mines of Great Britain rank almost with land in national importance, and are of such a nature that they cannot be worked by private enterprise without injuring the state in several directions. The coal-mines will afford a sufficient illustration of the need for nationalisation, and I will therefore indicate a few of the reasons which call for this overdue measure. There are two broad divisions which are convenient in the consideration of the subject; these are the state's own interest and that of the workers concerned. But we ought never to forget that the state's first interest is the condition of the worker.

The interests of the worker are: (1) Safety; (2) health, and reasonable, as opposed to vexatious and wearing, conditions in the mine itself; (3) wages, and the social and educational possibilities bound up with them.

As to safety, there is one essential difference between state and private management, which lies at the root of all such undertakings. The

former can have no temptation to shirk those safeguards which cost money: the latter can hardly avoid it. So difficult is it to institute and carry through the necessary precautions, that the men themselves cannot always be trusted to guard their own lives, and carry out the regulations which are framed to secure safety. But the state cannot afford to allow anyone to disregard such rules, for this happy-go-lucky person who may cause such mischief has his own important state value as well as have those more thoughtful and staid ones whose lives he imperils. He may one day be required to lead a forlorn hope, and his recklessness turned into useful channels may disclose a hero.

But the chief danger does not lie with the men themselves. In fact, we have only to look at the records to see that the legislation of the very state which is not allowed to work its own mines has saved a vast number of lives. If we study the history of such comparative security as we have already achieved, we shall gain some idea of what the ordinary capitalist will allow if interference be avoided. Of course it will be admitted that ideas generally in such matters have advanced. But it must at the same time be conceded that they have only advanced through hard fighting, and there is nothing to show that capitalism if left to itself throws off naturally its harsh sweating tendencies and becomes full of solicitude for the persons it

employs. It seems reasonable, therefore, to argue that, even if there were no other cogent reasons for the change, it is now time for the state to assume control for the prime purpose of introducing such arrangements as will make mining as safe as such an occupation can be made. These arrangements will by no means be mere rules and regulations, but will include, as a first charge upon the industry, such engineering methods and appliances as science and thought may prescribe. But in this question of safety the same principle is involved which I have referred to before, and in connection with other industries. I do not believe that we shall ever secure adequate safety, any more than we shall get pure and clean milk, by Act of Parliament. We shall only compass it when all interests combine to bring it about, and that is when the people as a whole takes due parental care of this vast body of workers, who with their families make up one-eighth of the population. There will no doubt be extra preliminary expense involved ; but when the national work has settled down we may anticipate an annual profit and loss account very much more favourable than private ownership can bring about. The reasons for this, or at least some of them, will appear later.

The things which cause loss of life and injury to the person all involve loss of money too. Hence, taking an average of years, it would probably pay private management better to be as careful

and generous as public ownership would be. But there is always that attempt to postpone the evil day of spending, that sailing near the wind, that general cheeseparing which the dreaded shareholder inspires. It would perhaps help forward the dawn of a better social life if that critic in the omnibus or train, the shareholder, were condemned upon every severe accident to spend a day or a week, or a month, according to the severity of the said accident, in doing in his feeble way the work that the dead miners had done. Some of the greater mines leave little room for improvement in the light of our present knowledge. Others seem too poor to be just to the workers in them. Here, then, is a proof of the need for national control in order that big and little, rich and poor, English, Welsh, and Scotch, may all have safety equally at all times.

The conditions of work, again, in the mines are of prime importance. Not only are there difficulties in making the lot of each fairly equal, but the actual working of a mine brings about conditions which have to be reckoned with. A miner does not go to his work in a fixed place like a weaver does; but his labours themselves carry him into new difficulties, dangers, and—which is the special point here—inconveniences and exertions which affect the money value of his labour. The nationalisation of mines would affect the miner from this point of view in two ways. At present a mining area is limited by the concession given, that is, sold;

and the planning of its working depends upon the rights which the company or purchaser may have secured. If the best—safest, most convenient, and in the end cheapest—method is to do all the roadmaking first, and work backwards from the outer boundary to the shafts, there can be no difference of opinion as to the desirability of placing the work in the hands of the state, so that all necessary money may be available just when wanted. And seeing that the nationalisation of mines connotes the abolition of concessions, partial purchases, and the like, it involves further the disappearance of all artificial boundaries, and leaves the engineers a free hand in opening up and developing a coalfield to the best advantage. The payment of the miner should be based upon a method which gives him similar sums for similar amounts of time devoted to the mine. The laborious process, therefore, of getting the men from the shaft to the face of coal to be worked should be dealt with in a spirit of justice and of average conditions.

Nationalisation has been prepared for during the past years by the splendid advance of Trade Union policy, which means, in short, that the devil shall not take the hindmost. The best men in the most favoured berths have given up their special advantages when the push came in order that those who were fighting in one way or another with the abnormal might secure reasonable terms. When state management comes, therefore, to

handle different mines in different counties, the chief difficulties will have been surmounted ; for the men themselves will have obtained, in a rough way, in the various districts, the terms which at the time were considered adequate. The questions of safety and wise administration only will come to the front first.

But above ground there is a very large outlook for state care, and here we are again in the presence of land nationalisation. The housing of the miner leaves much to be desired, and I need not go over the bitter controversies of recent years in order to emphasise the need for a free hand in compassing decent housing conditions. When we reach the point of municipal houses planned and built so as to supply the best accommodation possible for a certain scale of miners' wages, we shall be ready also for the elaboration of other social benefits. The depot in the new miners' town will be stocked from the headquarters of the county farms, and thus the prime necessities of good food will be available on the best terms.

But before leaving the personal aspect of mine nationalisation, I may remind the student that in all these social efforts one fundamental principle or fact can never be lost sight of. If in any direction wages or benefits of any kind are less than the workman may think fair, he must ever be more content when he knows that the people as a whole, rather than a few wealthy persons, receives what

he loses. Social action of this kind is reciprocal and very good for us all. The people will give up anything to secure the safety of its mining friends ; and, on the other hand, the miners will grudge little to secure for every poor hearth a cheery blaze.

There are some, I fear, who will smile at my optimism, and will throw at me, as if they told against me, the Post Office, Telephone Service, and perhaps some other public undertakings. But it will be seen throughout that I start from premisses which differ from many of those that rule us now. I wish to secure for England everything which is best, not cheapest ; a sweated wage leaves no money for desirable purchases, that is, for efficient trade and manufacture of all kinds. So without wasting good space upon arguments as dead as those of the schoolmen, I respectfully claim that I am right.

I am writing to and for those who are but indifferently acquainted with the details of our mining industry, and I fear that a mere reference to Blue Books will not cause many of my readers to procure them. I will therefore try, by piecing together a few extracts from just one Inspector's Report (1914), to give some idea of the atmosphere of our miners' work. Mr. Hugh Johnstone refers to neglect in sending in the due notices which the law requires ; to exaggerated but well-founded complaints from workmen—some anonymous—which led to remedies ; and to a large number of failures to report.

But the terrible facts in these reports are what we must attend to here.

Two breastings in the Ten Feet seam had been thirled into one another, and the colliers in both breastings were engaged in clearing out the intervening strip of coal, when about two tons of dirt fell from two slips in the roof and crushed the deceased to death. The roof was very bad, but the colliers were aware of the danger and worked accordingly. The stone fell between the timber without giving any warning. . . .

Deceased was engaged with his mates in ripping a jig in the Hard Mine seam within a few yards of the working face. Owing to the presence of two parallel slips the ripping had fallen higher than expected, and while the men were engaged in removing the fall, a large body of stone fell from the side over the pack and crushed deceased so severely that he died shortly after admission to the infirmary. A careful examination of the roof and sides had been made about $1\frac{1}{2}$ hours previously by the fireman and the men, and they all considered that the place was safe. . . .

Deceased was working at a long wall face in the Two Row seam, when the overlying clod suddenly fell from a slip. Part of it struck deceased, causing injuries from which he died on the same day. The fireman had examined the face by sounding only two minutes prior to the accident, and considered it to be safe. . . .

The accident occurred at the side of a level in the Thick Coal. The chargeman was getting a piece of coal off the side with a pick and deceased was

standing close to the same side, when the fall came off at a break and extended farther than anticipated, and part of the coal fell upon deceased, causing injuries from the effects of which he died in hospital on the same day. Had he stood on the opposite side of the road he would have been safe. . . .

~ The accident happened at the working face in the Big Flint seam. Deceased was preparing to set a prop and bar at the required distance to support the roof, when an oval shaped stone fell upon him. The deceased had examined the roof within three minutes prior to the accident, and it appeared to be quite good and safe. The Under Manager had examined the roof of the place about an hour previously and considered it to be safe. The stone fell without previous warning. An examination of the cavity revealed the presence of a smooth glassy surface surrounding it which could not have been detected beforehand. . . .

Deceased went up one side of a stall in order to examine it at the commencement of his shift, while his brother went down the other side. A fall was heard, and deceased was found to be buried. Rescue operations were immediately commenced, but a succession of falls occurred, and deceased was only got out 13 hours later. As he was alone when the fall occurred, there was no available evidence as to what he was doing. It was estimated that 100 tons of material came down. . . .

Deceased had prepared a shot-hole in the roof coal, on purpose to make a lip to work about a foot of coal along the way head siding to make height for the full tubs. The deputy had arrived with a

battery and cable to fire it, when a very extensive fall of roof coal occurred. The deputy had inspected the place about an hour prior to the accident and considered it to be safe. . . .

Deceased was a regular holer, but owing to the absence of a loader he was asked to take his place for that shift. After filling three tubs the stallman set a bar close up to the buttock, and left the deceased to take out the catch prop. The stallman went into the other benk and fixed a bar. He heard a fall of roof, and on going to deceased, saw he was covered by a fall. The deceased was probably engaged pulling some loose coal from the face on which the fallen stone rested. If the roof had been properly examined and tested the accident would most probably have been prevented. . . .

Deceased was filling a tub at a longwall face in the Eight Feet seam, when, without previous warning, a large piece of coal fell from the face and crushed him to the floor. He died from the effects of his injuries on the same day. The coal fell from a concealed slip and reeled out four roof supports against which sprags were set to the coal face. . . .

The deceased was liberating a prop set under the ripping at the way end of his stall, and was using his pick to undercut it when it suddenly flew out, and a piece of rock, about 30 cwts. in weight, fell upon him, killing him instantly. A prop-drawer—ringer and chain—was provided, and should have been used to withdraw the prop. . . .

Deceased was engaged under the supervision of the fireman in withdrawing a setting of timber, preparatory to firing a shot in the roof. Having released the bar at one end by cutting the head side

post, the deceased and his mate were under the ripping, using a wood prop to lever the bar down, when the roof fell, reeling out two settings. Deceased was seriously injured, and died a few minutes after reaching the hospital on the same day. It was an error of judgment on the part of the fireman to allow the deceased to use a prop to lever the bar down. He should have ordered them to use a safety contrivance for the purpose. . . .

Deceased and another were engaged in withdrawing, by means of a safety contrivance, a disused prop which had been buried by the rising floor to a depth of two feet. The Sylvester chain had been attached to one of four steel girders that were resting on a mouthing bar 9 feet long which had been set for some three months. After using the ratchet lever for about one and a half minutes, the whole of the girders collapsed. No roof fell. The girder on which the chain was secured was probably drawn from off the prop at the opposite end, and in falling pushed the mouthing bar off the inbye support. The mouthing bar was snapped about 3 feet from the outbye end, probably as the result of the girders falling on it. One of the girders fell upon deceased and killed him instantly. . . .

Deceased was taking a tub of coal outbye and it became derailed at a junction. The tub was replaced on the rails, and deceased was in the act of rehooking his horse to it, when three settings of timber were suddenly struck out by a fall of roof in a cavity above them. Deceased was buried beneath the débris and killed instantly. The top 'Thick Coal' working faces were approaching the junction and appeared to have brought about a disturb-

ance of the ground, and so caused the fall and the reeling out of the timber. The settings had been fixed from three to twelve months previously, but were not laced together, and a cavity which was observed extending over the adjacent settings had been left unpacked above the laggings. Steps will be taken to fill up the spaces above such timbering in future. . . .

Deceased was illegally riding on a clip attached to two full tubs on the endless haulage rope in a dip, when his shoulder came in contact with a low ledge of roof and he was rolled over the top of the first tub and dropped on the coupling between them, sustaining severe injuries. Pneumonia supervened. . . .

The pony driver said that when he took away a tub of stone which deceased had filled, he, deceased, was using a wedge under the stone that fell, and when he returned he found that the stone had fallen upon him. Apparently the wedging had relieved and brought it down. It was rash to drive a wedge under a block of stone weighing about two tons, and to rely upon a newly set prop for safety. . . .

Deceased's work was to open and shut a door . . . by means of a rope and without leaving a refuge-hole. He opened it to allow a train to pass, and when last seen was standing watching the train. Later on he was found 20 yards down the roadway. He said he had been dragged along by the train. He was taken home, and his injuries treated as being only slight. He, however, died on the 21st from septic pneumonia. . . .

Deceased was ascending in the cage with eight others at the end of his shift, when he apparently

fainted, fell into the cage bottom, and dropped out into the shaft. He was subject to fainting fits. The cage was not provided with gates, but had two iron bars across each end. Had proper cage gates been fixed the accident would not have occurred. These were provided after the accident.

The accident emphasises the absolute necessity of keeping overwind preventing apparatus in perfect order, and also the importance of winding engine-men realising that such apparatus is not fool-proof. . . . It was an exceedingly rash and risky thing to attempt to raise a hoppit containing a man or men at a speed of anything like 50 feet per second.

Two horses were stabled in an upset off the main intake level a short distance from the shaft, and on the morning of the day on which the accident occurred, the manager and a fireman descended into No. 3 shaft in order to ascertain the condition of the horses, and if necessary to remove them. They proceeded inbye along the rise level for a distance of 370 yards, when they descended to the lower level and came outbye until they were stopped by the tail of the water. They then returned by the rise level to the top of the upset in which the horses were stabled, broke through a stopping there, and found the horses floating in the water, cold and hungry and almost exhausted. They obtained further assistance, placed a torch lamp on the dip level at the tail of the water, and headed the horses in that direction, when they swam towards the light and were placed in a safe position. . . . The

injured men had, meantime, gone to the surface for a supply of gruel and food for the horses, went inbye along the rise level, and on the way ignited some fire-damp, which burned them on the face and hands. . . . What took place was exactly what might have been anticipated, and the only explanation offered was that *they were all so excited over the rescuing of the horses* that the danger from gas had not occurred to them. Safety lamps were subsequently introduced.

Leaving now the problem of the workers, let me turn to the question of the state's interest in its own wealth. I am not exaggerating when I say that we have no security—except of course such as may have been introduced on account of the war—that this wealth shall be applied to the enrichment and comfort of our own people. But let me exaggerate by putting an extreme case. Suppose the products of the Kimberley diamond mines were exchanged for our black diamonds because both were in the hands of millionaires who had their own plans to work out. What law, or regulation, or even custom have we to prevent such an outrage upon the commonwealth? The whole world has been allowed, just as if we were the open sea, to fish in our mines at their own good pleasure. When we have these mines in full working order under the control of the state Great Britain will be able the better to talk to the world. We shall then be able to estimate to some extent whether it is desirable

to export our coal at a few pence profit to all parts of the globe. For it has become an article of quite new virtue in recent years. We may obtain from it, besides heat and light, the terrible explosives of our present war, motor spirit, flavours, scents, and colours which are a necessity in the prosecution of our various industries, if we are to succeed in them in our struggle with the busy world. One of the chief by-products of coal distillation is sulphate of ammonia, about which there is a pretty story to tell later in connection with our farming industry.

At present coal is in such a position that no one, unless he felt that he had behind him the power to consider the whole output as one, could advise us as a population, anxious to do the best we can with the riches of the state, concerning the wisest method of treating such output. Leaving the question of export and bunker coal, we may look at the uses of coal under the following heads: transport, lighting, heating, and various chemical possibilities. We do not yet know for certain in what form it will be best or most convenient to use our motive power and heating facilities. It might be far more economical to treat a large percentage of coal at the pit-head by making gas, coke, patent fuel, as well as the very important by-products of coal-tar, there. The progress of mechanical devices which do not depend upon coal for driving power is rapid; and it is necessary to adapt ourselves to

these new conditions, both by diminishing the crude uses of coal which we are making, and by developing the resources which are inherent in the product in the most up-to-date methods.

It is needless to tell the householder that there is a great difference in coal. The most obvious use made of it—burning in the kitchen and parlour grates—is that which will probably be the first to be changed, whether the mines remain under private ownership or not. But under national management the varied demands of the public could be more justly dealt with than under the present system ; for, in a delicate position, such as coal-mining will soon reach, we shall need to place reliance upon an authority which all can trust.

It is probable, as I have said, that the ordinary householder will have to be content in the future with that form of light and heating, due to coal, which can be most conveniently reserved for him. It may be found desirable to extract the greater part of the gas at the pit's mouth and distribute it for various purposes from that point after so much of it has been used as may be found requisite to develop electricity. The competition between gas and electricity is of absorbing interest, and we have to estimate in the near future by what methods we are to distribute what I may call 'energy' for short in our remoter districts. The problem of traction may perhaps be eliminated in this connection, though we do not by that means

eliminate the influence of coal : the benzol extracted from it will always be available for the motor. We are threatened with coke, briquettes, and anthracite only for those household purposes which cannot be so well performed by gas and electricity ; and when it comes to that point it is desirable for every reason that there should be no home in the British Isles so modest that it does not feel its interests to be guarded by the state. I may say here bluntly that I want gas in every village in the land. There is no more convenient method of dealing with all the needs of a workman's home than gas fires and stoves. The natural blaze round which the family gathers in chill evenings in upland parishes is wood ; and if we are all to be reduced from coal to coke or patent fuel we should make national plans for securing log fires out of the surplus of our new plantations. The war is waking us up, I am thankful to know, in the matter of afforestation. But the new agricultural activities which I have tried to show to be necessary will call for hot water to be ever ready, and gas is the natural agent to which we turn. The shepherd, too, our most interesting and typical case, ought every morning—whether the cold be bitter or not, but absolutely then when his ewes need his care—to be able to secure quickly, and without disturbing the family, a hot, even if it be a modest, breakfast before he issues to his almost sacred work.

I may take it for granted that the Navy is

ever discussing the question of the relative values of coal and oil in the immediate future. If coal were to receive the preference, I do not suppose that the state will feel any compunction in taking for its imperial naval purposes every pound of the most suitable coal, even though the rest of the world go short. This case is but an illustration of the need for assurance in many directions besides safety and efficiency in war. We ought to study dispassionately what our own requirements for peace activities are, and should not allow the foundation of those activities to be dissipated in directions which are possibly injurious to the Empire. When it comes to the tug-of-war there is never any question raised as to the power and duty of the state to control its own products. Why then should there be any hesitation in ordinary times in assuming possession of an industry under which private management puts a whole population under the control of a few capitalists ; leaves the safety of the workers to the hazards of special legislation ; allows the people to suffer the inconveniences of a national strike ; and risks the denudation of our buried riches at a period when every intellect in the state should be laid under contribution towards organising a scientific treatment and distribution of those riches while there is yet time ?

Early development is necessary in many things if they are to succeed. The war gives us only too good reason for starting afresh in many directions.

But I might add that it gives us also the opportunity; for Germany's headway, whatever it may be, will no longer deter us from acting for ourselves. This is perhaps Germany's greatest economic mistake. And do not let us forget that carelessness in regard to our peace organisation and resources, and a sudden change of mind, might in itself become a cause of war, a cause of coolness which might eventuate in war; for other nations might found industries upon such carelessness, and might naturally resent our indifference to their ruin. Unfortunately, Germany had begun to treat us as a nation fast asleep. Diplomacy, therefore, in the future, after the lessons taught us by this war, will have to be a rather different thing, a perhaps slightly more commercial thing, than it has been in the past. We cannot always guarantee ourselves a Sir Edward Grey at the Foreign Office, and should in consequence endeavour to build up a wise national policy, a tradition, in international affairs. Just as we have had to sink private interests in this fight for the right to live at all, and have left ourselves in the hands of the Government; so there is undoubtedly coming upon us an era in which we shall be compelled to organise our national products in such a way that the private person will be unable, even unwittingly, to injure the state by his capitalistic activities. Free Trade will become a more important policy than ever, but it will be Free Trade guided and

controlled by the state in many directions. What we are to do with our coal is one of the first problems which we shall have to solve ; and it seems almost obvious that it is for the Empire to place this business in the hands of an imperial authority, so that steam coal or benzol, if required outside the Empire, may have a diplomatic as well as a commercial value there. Bradford and such areas need specific goods for their industries, whether it be colours for the dyeing vat, or starches, or some chemical ingredient, and it is intolerable to us as a people that we should be unable to turn our coal-tar or our potatoes into the required articles, but must go to the stills and factories of our bitterest enemies for them. But this work alone needs for its full development a great imperial and a series of minor boards. State-aided joint-stock companies are very indifferent substitutes for the real thing.

The mines that I am referring to are a salient case in point. They turn out coals of so many varieties that it will require very careful study to organise to the best advantage the manufacture of the almost innumerable articles which are obtainable from them. Capitalism is a very curious thing. It takes no cognisance of nationality, and might lead, has led, to enemy management in our midst. Now the mere antithesis of free trade against a tariff is pure nonsense in such a case as this. Scientific man, business organiser,

and diplomatist all have a part to play before we can wisely or even safely give his own proportion of the final output into the hands of the free-trader to pay for his imports with. Now that we have learnt what can happen, it is just as well to make a common-sense and business arrangement with the present 'private' owners to take over what is fundamentally the property of the state, and make the best use of it we can. There can be no question as to possibilities: this is no experiment; the responsibility must be undertaken once for all. The due use of the mines by the state cannot but further imperial interests and remove the risk of inimical situations. The great mining population will then be an asset of the state, just as those of the Navy, Army, and Civil Services are. The new contingent of gas-makers, chemists, and engineers will, I hope, grow into a noble body of experts, from whom the Empire will reap both riches and social strength.

I may perhaps be pardoned if I here interpolate that I am reaching a certain social position, not through any preconceived theory, but by the simple demands of business and scientific organisation. I am prepared to accept social betterment on those terms rather than upon the ratiocinations of rival theories. My only theories, but they are large and vital ones, are the supremacy of the state and the equality of the individuals in it from the point of view of the state. If the state should

take over the control, little by little, of those activities which she only can handle perfectly, we shall by the same movement attain to the perfect activity of the individual too. Let us therefore get used to movements such as I am advocating, train our youth up to the careers they afford, and by the education they call for, and as time rolls on the state, or its local representatives the counties, will acquire more spheres of usefulness, a larger and healthier population, and a happier one.

I think that as an Empire we may fairly claim that in our command of the seas we have been reasonable in our treatment of others. The attack upon our naval supremacy has not been dictated by any feeling of injustice to German interests : we had taken her to our spartan bosom before we knew her for a wild beast. The British idea of freedom involves the freedom of other peoples, not their slavery. As Sir Francis Younghusband put it in his ' Fight for Right ' circular :

We believe that Great Britain in this War is fighting, not for her own safety and honour alone, but for the best interests of the whole world. We and our Allies stand for Right against Might ; for a right ideal of free civilisation against a wrong ideal of organised power. We are fighting the battle of humanity.

But England is the sum of all her citizens. We, every man and woman, are called upon to fight in

this battle. THERE ARE, OR SHOULD BE, NO NON-COMBATANTS IN THIS WAR. .

WE are England. Her past lives in us; her future will come from us. Her survival hangs, at the present moment, on our courage, patience, and self-sacrifice. A huge responsibility and a huge opportunity is offered to every man and woman now alive.

Now let us work for supremacy of the same kind in scientific strength and the careful husbanding of our resources; for there is no knowing how such power may be for the benefit of the human race. If we can get into something like the spirit of science—which really means the spirit to which scientific men have attained—we shall do well. The time may be short for the purpose: our isles are small and the world is large. But there may yet be time to work out for the world the problem of a social state which, by the careful organisation of the various resources at our command, may provide an object-lesson in free joint working to a common end.

It is not easy to avoid the dream of our rich coalfields treated to an effort on the part of all for economic working. If we examine the map of England we shall see that it is only in the eastern counties that very extended pipe lines would be required to supply the kingdom with gas. An extensive and thorough treatment of coal at its source would have great advantages after it had

become a decision on the part of all our scientists that gas, coke, and patent fuel were the best form of use, and that coal itself should be distilled rather than distributed in almost every case. At present there is an enormous annual outlay in carrying coal to hundreds of gasworks, and an immense amount of unsightly landscape involved. If we could look at the whole problem as one it is probable that some vast and beneficent changes could be brought about. We cannot even study these now : we are not our own masters in our own house ; and the hints and estimates which such writers as Mr. Jevons give us are scarcely noted, because everyone knows that under present circumstances we should only be piling the Pelion of chaos on the Ossa of injustice if we tried to act.

The expert would not admit that there is any limit to be put to the possibility of gas distribution within the British Isles. But he would probably admit that the present system is the best for a great city like London, to supply which with gas from the nearest mines would require pipe lines of vast capacity. In London, too, there are facilities for adequate study and treatment of the by-products, for in such a centre of the Empire our leaders in all branches of science must tend to congregate.

But the towns in the manufacturing districts would gain if their distributing mains were supplied with gas from the state distilleries, and with electricity generated under the most approved

system there. Probably the grosser or primary forms of chemical manufacture would be carried through in the same neighbourhood, leaving only the material for the more delicate operations to be transported to their laboratories or factories. There is an indirect good which would inhere in such a system which ought not to be overlooked. The history of our local parliaments, if they should be written, would show that committees which deal with gas are often changed, and are constantly committing acts which are neither convenient nor economical when looked at in the broader aspect. To scrap this good machinery because the chairman is an enthusiast; to leave this other to its wasteful course because he is not; to discharge a thoroughly valuable manager or engineer and to employ an inefficient one for reasons of so-called economy; to subject the municipal activity here involved to the rough and tumble of party conflict is to subject the population of our towns to quite unnecessary risks. Just as water is purchased by many of the smaller towns from the large municipalities, so gas and its derivatives could be bought from the large central undertakings when we are in a position to set them up.

The problem of our coal-mines is only beginning to be considered when we have disposed of the product coal and its simpler components, gas, coke, sulphate of ammonia, and such commonplace things. The less obvious by-products of

coal are so important that, in discussing even a portion of them, Lord Moulton said that they had oppressed his thoughts day and night. 'In my opinion,' he said, 'we are at a crisis of our national life.' It is not my business here to enlarge upon the steps by which this crisis came upon us. As Dr. Ormandy said soon after the war began :

The rapid industrial development of foreign countries called for enormous capital for railways, shipping, docks, and harbours, and the opening up of mining and agricultural properties, and it was felt that a better return could be obtained from such ventures. English spinners and weavers were supplying the whole world with their products, while loom and mule machinery-makers were working night and day to supply these foreign purchasers with the machinery for their infant industries. . . . Nature had been lavish with our raw materials . . . we provided other countries, at great profit to ourselves, with all the means necessary for competing with us in these markets in which we had hitherto enjoyed a practical monopoly. . . . Capital directed by ignorance and apathy cannot hope to compete for ever against the forces which are brought to bear to-day.

Let me draw special attention to the following passage from the same source :

The industrial life of Germany may be said to have commenced little more than a generation ago. To all intents and purposes an inland country,

with little seaboard, they were under a huge disadvantage in every department which required raw materials obtained from abroad. In many directions their natural resources were comparatively poor. They had no iron ores which were comparable with the hematites of Cumberland, their limestone was largely dolomitic, their coals were for the most part poor in quality, and lay often in distorted seams, more like those of our Bristol coalfields than the comparatively easily worked deposits in our northern area. It was recognised at an early period in their industrial development that natural progress in a country situated as was their own could not be left entirely to individualistic effort. Nationalisation of railways and canals became an obvious necessity if differential traffic rates were to be allowed, and differential rates were an absolute necessity if large industries were to be developed in the interior of Germany far from the seaboard. Too much credit cannot be given to the far-sighted way in which every problem of agriculture and industry in Germany is regarded from a national standpoint. It is realised by everyone that individuality must be, to a certain extent, fettered for the benefit of the nation as a whole. In this country individuality runs rampant, and except in times of stress, such as those through which we are passing, the national or imperial bearing of any individualistic action receives not the slightest consideration. The very people whose fathers sold land to the railway companies at absurdly inflated prices now complain that, owing to the high railway freights in this country, they cannot make adequate

profits from the investment of the money obtained from those same companies by an earlier extortion. No doubt many of those who have made their profits from such action would like to see the English railways nationalised and freights reduced at the expense of that patient beast of burden, the British public. Whereas Germany is continuously developing her network of waterways, we in this country, with a customary lack of national forethought, allowed our waterways to become controlled by the railway companies.

Now, though we must all bow in respectful admission of the truth of Dr. Ormandy's facts, we may claim in extenuation that in England there was a widespread feeling of goodwill to the world in general, a desire to live and let live, even a determination to make friends if we could with this far-seeing (although short-sighted) and far-scheming German people. I claim this, and I state further that one of the greatest disasters of the war lies in the facts that this anxiety to trust others and to co-operate with them has received so fatal a shock, and that all our commercial activities in the future will have to be adapted to reconsidered lines. In a great organised brotherhood of nations the loss of a particular dyestuff industry or a special kind of bottle might in itself have been almost negligible. But in the new light of recent events our policy must be based upon principles of another order : and we must see to it at the same time that

this ill-wind shall blow us nothing but good even in our moral attitude towards mankind. I do not believe that as a nation we shall gain anything by making our schools 'training stables for war,' as Dr. Liebknecht put it, or our education one which 'wears blinkers,' to take Lord Moulton's phrase. The Lord Justice's little anecdote would appal me if I thought he meant that our chemists were to come out of that mould. Let me quote it :

Once I found myself [he said] on the top of one of the Dolomite mountains, and the only other person there besides the guides was a German. I found out that he was a chemist, and I began to talk on a chemical subject. He told me he was only an organic chemist. He had not exhausted my resources, and I began to talk of coal-tar and pharmaceutical products. Then he told me he was a coal-tar by-product chemist. That did not beat me, because I had just been fighting a case of canary yellow. I thought I would get some subject which was common to us, and I slipped into the subject of canary yellow. Still the same ominous silence for a time, and then he said, 'I am only a coal-tar chemist dealing with blues.' But I had not finished. With an Englishman's pertinacity, not believing I was beaten, I racked my brains for a coal-tar blue—I had had to advise on some cases—and I gradually, without a too obvious change of subject, slipped into that. Then he finally defeated me, because he said in equally solemn tones, but equally proud of the fact, 'I only deal with methyl blues.'

Lord Moulton's demands for the large company which he has suggested are three—it must be large, national, and co-operative. Now, a national undertaking is all this to its maximum, and it solves in addition the free-trade question. We can let in or not, under conditions or not, just that amount or that quality which we can fully assimilate or bring about a useful exchange in. Do not let us forget that we are here dealing with a commodity of a very curious character. It may happen that secrets are still hidden in a lump of coal which a state may desire to preserve at least for a time. It may desire to ring all sorts of changes on the output, at one time issuing, storing, or merely studying some mysterious explosive, at another wrestling with the synthesis of some wild flower scent, or some flavour that Brillat-Savarin might have desired with all his gastronomic soul. It is quite easy to believe, when we have once been told the fact, that it is three hundred times more costly to crush the scent out of some of our favourite flowers than to draw it from the recesses of the dangerous mine. If all odours were as expensive as natural heliotropin, we should have to pay some seven hundred million pounds for those scents which Germany has annually distilled.

There is one drawback to the discussion of these chemical wonders to which Aristophanes only could do full justice. The names, if we want to be quite exact, are a little stiff for the ordinary reader,

although they carry so much of their history within themselves. Here are a few culled from 'The British Coal-Tar Industry' (Williams & Norgate), a reservoir of information upon this subject. We find such stalwarts as these: di- and tri- oxyanthraquinones; hydrocyan rosaniline and tri-phenyl rosaniline; chloroxy naphthalates; diamido benzene hydrochloride; and diazo sulpho toluidinic acid. Canary yellow and methyl blue, mauve and madder brown, sound much more like the goods we have been used to. But, for all that, the marshalling by the chemist of his marvellous products in their serried ranks and in their wonderful order has a real beauty of its own. Professor Perkin was always very anxious to impress upon us this fact, the scientific and industrial sides of any subject such as chemistry cannot be separated with success. Some of the greatest, if not all, of chemical discoveries of a valuable industrial kind were made 'in experiments of a purely theoretical nature.'

One of the prime by-products of gas-making from coal is an article which has to some extent been 'snowed under' by the popularity of T.N.T. Sulphate of ammonia has been the cause of a very pretty national comedy or tragedy, of which I must try to give some account. A deputation from the Central Chamber of Agriculture waited upon Lord Selborne and Mr. Acland on February 2. The object of the deputation was to get the issue of licences for the export of sulphate of ammonia

suspended, *in order that its price to the farmers might be reduced* (to £5 a ton if possible). The attitude of mind revealed in this astounding request is so astonishing that it is difficult to know which point connected with the matter to take first. It appears that some 300,000 tons could be sold for export at £17 a ton, and, as Lord Selborne urged, such a sale 'is a real contribution towards the solving of the difficulties of financing the war and steadying the foreign exchange.' So we might imagine—if we did not know our actors in this play so well—that the farmer and his advisers of the Chambers of Agriculture are so excited in their efforts to supply the country's need for food that they want to use up every pound of this fertiliser rather than see it go abroad to grow sugar for us and the like. But this view of the question will not do. If the matter were not known to be a farce before we begin, I might ask the reader to compare dates and policies. On February 2 the Chambers ask for what is in effect, but in an unjust and bungling way, a state fixed price for sulphate of ammonia *in order that* farmers might use it freely. On the 8th of the same month Sir Sydney Olivier issues under instructions *an appeal to farmers to use the fertiliser, and offers to tell them what to do with it!*

Now every such by-product as this is one of a number the sum total of receipts from which has to be considered before the makers can reasonably be expected to estimate the various possibilities of

price. The object of every manufacturer is naturally to keep stocks cleared, so that money may not be unnecessarily locked up. If any single item becomes a drug either naturally or by artificial restrictions such as this upon export, the whole profit and loss account is affected injuriously. This is what Mr. Acland said to the deputation :

The Government, in the interest of food production, is responsible, and has certain powers to secure, that there shall be ample supplies. They are not in any similar way responsible, and they have not in any similar way the power, to control the price at which those supplies shall be available.

We must realise that the prohibition of export which is now in operation cannot last for ever. Four times as much sulphate is normally produced in this country as is consumed by farmers and for commercial purposes. In many cases sulphate is produced as a by-product of industries, of which another product is one or other of the materials necessary for munition purposes. Immediately these makers find stock accumulating on their hands they will claim that the suspension of exports is affecting their output of materials required for munitions. Clearly we cannot go on indefinitely refusing the demands that export should again be allowed, therefore we want farmers to realise that they ought to take advantage of the present prohibition of export to buy as much of this fertiliser as they possibly can.

So this ignorant and unfair attitude of the

farmer towards sulphate risks the whole success of the effort towards munitions of war besides injuriously affecting exchange which needs all the help it can get. No amount of patriotic energy will replace the need for a credit balance in the financial statement of every undertaking that is involved. No one can contend against the lack of money, however anxious he may be to do so, and an artificial restriction of the selling rights of the firms who are making this by-product might result in paralysis of the state armaments. The long lists of makers of, and dealers in, this commodity, which have been issued by the Board of Agriculture, will show anyone how vast are the interests involved.

The whole thing is pitiable in the extreme : I will go over the points. The state is at present making a very small part of its own munitions because of the sudden stress which fell upon us, causing us to reach out vigorously for help wherever it could be obtained in private works. But looking at the matter as one for future organisation it will be well to keep in mind Lord Moulton's words :

supposing our war minister had been in the last few years buying in the cheapest market for the sake of cheapness, and that he had had the munitions of war manufactured by Krupps, of Essen. I think he would have been lynched three months ago. Now there are munitions of peace which are essential for the defence of the great industries of the country which are vital.

When the present tyranny is overpast we shall have to take serious steps, beyond what we are now taking under stress of war, to secure an absolute monopoly of, and control over, every item upon which may depend the security and well-being of the state for peace as well as war. Do not let us overlook the facts that (1) many of the objects which our war regulations secure are peace, or general economic, objects, food and the like; (2) the economic pressure is reduced during war, for the workers are all busily employed; therefore these state services and controls are more important to the worker in peace than in war. It is a mere accident that munitions and manures should dovetail into each other, but they may also—unless precautions are taken—clash. But it is not an accident that the state is committing suicide by allowing private ignorance and greed to interfere with what would be the natural order of good management in both directions. There is no point at which coal in its multitudinous uses does not touch the social life and safety of the state; and it cannot long be borne that antique individualism of this naked kind should injure us to the death. The middleman's case will need very careful consideration. If three agents can each earn 1s. 6d. a ton upon passing coal from pit to cellar, why should not a hundred turn an honest penny on the same ton? I remember a little cargo of food that changed hands seventeen times

on passage. The betting spirit will be very hard to kill.

If we were managing our own agriculture and coal-mines we should use to a nicety what the land required each year, and we should draw our sulphate of ammonia from the gas-making undertakings which were dealing with the coal from our own mines. This would not exhaust the national output ; and the natural outlet for the private concerns would be the overseas buyers who want to send us goods in exchange. Price here, again, would have no meaning to the state service : we should turn sulphate of ammonia into food, and if we had too much for that purpose we should ask our chemists to turn it into something else, or we might export too, as a state ; if too little, there are substitutes for it. But we should at least be shielded from that most odious of all sights, the barefaced attempt of a chamber of agriculture—pretending to speak for and assist a whole community—to destroy the real value of a very useful commodity, upon which indirectly the safety of the state depends, by using departmental action of what I may call a nefarious kind. The same spirit would rejoice in the wrecking of corn-laden ships because the shortage of wheat, or, in other words, famine, would give a better price to the home-grown stock !

Sulphate of ammonia makes a good peg upon which to hang a tale which in its various aspects could easily fill another volume. One of the most

persistent warnings which issue from the Board of Agriculture, from the colleges, from the A.O.S., and from those experts to whose experience we all defer, is the practical financial risk which the farmer runs in buying fertilisers and patent foods of all kinds. This is the risk which has driven the consumer into so many and varied methods of defence. Some of these warnings are to the effect that in certain preparations the chemical constituent required is present in adequate percentage, *but it is not soluble*, and is therefore worthless for the purpose for which it would be used ! For how long will the state permit this kind of thing to continue : when will it begin so to care for its people as to secure for them a shelter from the tyranny of the ubiquitous cheat ?

Pamphlet No. 101 of the University of Leeds will show those interested what care is required in the application of such fertilisers as sulphate of ammonia, and what infinite pains our Agricultural Colleges are bestowing upon all such subjects. No. 73 from the same batch is a masterpiece. To show, however, that even doctors can disagree, I quote these words from Professor Gilchrist's (Armstrong College) address :

Sulphate of ammonia should not be used for pasture, as is recommended in a leaflet just issued by the Board of Agriculture, in which also I do not agree with its recommendations for beans, peas, and clover,

CHAPTER IV

RAILWAYS

THERE is little need for me to enlarge very fully upon the desirability of public ownership of railways : the question seems almost as good as settled through the sad medium of a terrible war. In an interview I had with an official personage I ventured to express a certain anxiety lest the special circumstances of the present state management might militate against, rather than for, nationalisation. I feared that the necessity for all civilian convenience to give way to military exigencies, and for ordinary upkeep, renewals and improvements—as long as safety was secured—to be ‘scamped’ for the sake of economy, would tend rather to prejudice the much-needed reform. He assured me that there was no need for alarm on that score ; that the present state management was extremely successful ; that the change had, in his opinion, come to stay.

It is not to be wondered at, that railways have to some extent followed the same line as the banks in the matter of amalgamations and a uniform system of working. Competition here as there is

a matter of appearance rather than of fact. But this very appearance is a costly affair. The reader may study the question in many useful books, such as Mr. Emil Davies' 'Railway Nationalisation' (A. & C. Black and Collins). I am more concerned here to discuss those points connected with it which impinge upon the other state services which I advocate. But it will perhaps be well to enumerate some of the more obvious advantages which are involved in the suppression of private property in railway transport.

I do not care to emphasise unduly the minor matter of directors and their fees. I should like to employ in all state service the honest labour of every person who might be dispossessed by our social requirements. But it is unquestionably a loss to efficiency as well as to economy to run our railways under the present system of management. The directors can only say ditto to, or interfere with, a really able manager; and the attempt to run a genuine national service, inspired by the needs of the country rather than by the desires of the shareholders, would under present conditions involve a parliament of all the directors at least. The history of our lines would disabuse us of the idea that fundamental, long-sighted scientific examination and study lies at the bottom of our present network; and it will be a labour of no mean order to disentangle the results of our past methods when we come to organise a real state system. A

free hand in the direction of land would have made a vast difference. It will make some still ; but the benefit of state ownership of land and railways, both, will reflect more upon the development of the land itself than upon the lines which serve it in the future. For the idea that every commercial traveller in London, Liverpool, Manchester, and Birmingham must have three or four routes to choose from, while the dweller in the distant hamlet has neither railway nor motor to assist him will need reconsideration. The general average of facilities must be raised all round before we can elaborate upon our earlier methods. But almost at once the treatment of the various competing services as one will give us more frequent fast and through trains as well as more thorough attention to intermediate and local traffic. In local traffic which can probably be estimated to a nicety, it matters little to the passenger what device the cars bear or who pays for them. But in special season trains and in the great bulk of goods transport it is of the utmost importance in view of economy, efficiency, and, I might almost add, safety, that the cars and wagons should be part of one national rolling stock usable at any depot and on any line. We may look forward in this connection to rolling stock of the very best type throughout. We shall have no occasion for any whose real place is the scrap-heap just because the financial exigencies of each separate company demands a cheap surplus

for special pressure either on a bank holiday or because of a peculiar accumulation on the wharves. The use of railways 'at the front' may give us a hint here. In the future we must have our railways so equipped and administered that we can with comparative ease apply our rolling stock quickly to the congested area, dispersing chaos before it has had time to mature. Need I try to elaborate the vast savings which will ensue when pooling or common user of wagons and cars has developed into the uniform stock of a state service? But I ought, perhaps, to remind the reader that the stock itself is but a portion of the loss due to separate companies. There is all the staffing and clerical work, 'the touting for business,' the returned empties, and the unnecessary blocking and friction involved in the system, to be paid for: one unnecessary or imperfect truck upon our lines, in these strenuous and difficult times, might lead to disaster as well as loss. And as I have come to that point I may say here, as I have said in the case of mines, that there is no one like-minded as the state itself is, when it comes to the safety of the individual traveller and the condition of the railway servant. There is a solid amount of work before us, when we have finally taken over the railways, in the direction of these two objects. But I will take these things later, because there are some points which require special consideration, and it might be taken for granted that a certain policy—the

opposite of that which I am urging—was the true one.

Mr. Emil Davies, to whose works I have referred, appears to look forward to a time 'when there will be only three fares charged throughout the whole of the United Kingdom—perhaps twopence for any journey up to 25 miles, sixpence for a journey between 25 and 100 miles, and a shilling for a journey above this.' And in the case of goods he advocates, what Mr. Rider Haggard pressed some time ago, a large use of the Post Office for packages as heavy as one hundredweight at a low price. I differ so profoundly from the policy expressed in these two ideals, that I will ask to be allowed to discuss the matter somewhat fully.

I would say quite simply to begin with that, from the points of view that I have already mentioned—safety and economy in working—the railway is not the place on which to pass a vacant hour at a cheap rate. Make business as convenient and economical as possible, but do not attract people to the trains without any motive but idleness, curiosity, or the idea of 'a cheap thing.' We need application in our various trades or professions; and there should be hesitation before we set out to move people so cheaply that there is no object in struggling with the difficulties which each one of us has in his own sphere: 'Here is this cheap ticket; let us fly to other troubles that we know

not of !' The trade we have now, and the enormous volume we hope soon to add to it, should make us very careful not to attract into the precincts of our stations those who have no real need to use the line. To take a man from London to Edinburgh for a shilling will, in my opinion, be a very doubtful benefit both to him and to us as a state.

But, coming to the goods' question, to use the cheap parcel-post is only to throw so much dust into our eyes. I can get a pound of butter from a very good dairy for fourpence postage, but when I have done so I have to that extent obscured the issue and have postponed the time when all my neighbours and I could get for a negligible freight—that is, at the dairy's price *without the postage*—the same butter *under much more appropriate conditions*. Does one really relish the idea of a pound of butter from the postman in July? If, you take my valley unit you will remember that I took a motor rather than a train service as the method of collecting all the produce to the depots, because each farm can thus be visited in turn. The distance does not come into the calculation: the valley is one, and the cost of collecting is a valley charge. It may be that the soil of a distant farm yields better results than that of a near one; but that, again, is a question of its tenure or rent, and mere distance, where all are under one control, does not become equivalent to sterility in the higher

scientific sense as the common method of looking at railways makes it now.

Mr. Davies might contend, though perhaps he is the last man to do so when the alternative is put to him, that my method of collecting equally the near and the distant without making different charges for the service is equivalent to, or as bad as, his cheap postal service. But, looked at fairly, it is the very antithesis of it. The adequate collection of all produce leaves the farmer, his family and staff, ample time and opportunity for carrying out in the best possible manner the work of the farm without troubling their heads about the financial results of their labours, which are in safe hands at the depot. A parcel-post delivery, on the other hand, brings back into force every single evil of 'the voluntary system.' Each farmer has to find his customer; produce, manufacture, and pack his goods unwatched; and the post office has to collect the parcel even though there be no other throughout the whole valley! I wonder what price would be low enough, without using minus signs, to pay for such a system as this?

Now let me turn to the natural opportunity of our state railway, which I have rather elbowed out of my little valley, because I want to show, to make it clear if I can, that motor services and railways must work in together rather than compete.

When we have collected, graded, and manufactured our various products, we shall need all that

the dear old locomotive can do for us to get our goods to the market and the store. The milk must go twice daily, the eggs once; the soft fruits in due season as swiftly as possible; and the meat at appropriate times; corn and cheese, hard fruits and bottled or preserved goods according to demand.

The point I wish to make and to press is that an adequate charge for these deliveries is required in order that reasonable geographical differences may have due weight, and that no *doctrinaire* or whimsical tendencies may be encouraged by some offer on the part of the state railway service to take this carefully prepared volume of food anywhere for 'a mere song.' No justice could be obtainable under such a system: the cost of delivery, as long as it is carried through under perfect and economical conditions, must have its proper place in the profit and loss account of the valley. A Yorkshire town surely should not be precluded from having its natural first charge upon a Yorkshire valley by some stupid state offer to take such goods as the valley produces for a nominal freight to Bristol or Liverpool. The prime important point to keep before us is—bulk of well-packed marketable goods which are able daily to secure a more assured place in the home because of their regularity of high-class quality.

There is the other side of the picture, and we shall need the railway to bring to the depot, for

distribution in the valley, those goods which cannot be produced there. The more prolific and well managed the area becomes the more money will there be for its inhabitants to spend upon the amenities of life. Tea, coffee, and sugar ; clothes ; these represent what the householder requires : our old friend sulphate of ammonia and oil-cake suggest the kind of goods which the farmer will want in moderation, for we must use as little as possible of outside commodities ; a threshing and mowing machine and new seeds typify those things which headquarters must ever provide with anxious care.

I have emphasised the general principles upon which I believe state railways ought to be conducted where they serve agriculture. Where we have to deal with large industries, such as coal, cotton, wool, and iron, the same general rules will no doubt have to be observed ; but I may be pardoned, I hope, if I try to analyse some of the needs of the future in this matter. I am convinced personally that individualism is carrying us down a decline which nothing but a social policy will stop. The mere time-tables in Bradshaw, not to speak of those goods' time-tables which we do not see, will prove that more is always given to those that already have much. The large towns receive more and faster services, and the smaller towns and rural districts are getting, if that be possible, less and less. There must be some period put to this facile descent, for it cannot be for the good of the people that

they should congregate more and always more in the largest centres, and less and still less on the open countryside. I admit that there is no heroic remedy for this : indeed our policy should be just the reverse of heroic unless the suggestions which have long been made for public ownership in several directions be regarded as heroic. They would certainly help in the policy of here a little and there a little ; a wise treatment of this kind over the whole will, before many years pass, bring about a remarkable change. By a carefully thought out time-table giving greater facilities to those important centres which are almost ignored by trains which are speeding to the towns of the Lord Mayors, and by a series of motor services running right into the hills for those purposes which I have been urging, we shall develop a minor kind of healthy centralisation and industry which will be of untold good.

This brings me to finance. The state management of our present lines will yield a large surplus if no improvements of a capital nature are made in them. The students of this question devote much time and ingenuity to the spending of this surplus. Mr. Davies, for instance, as I have shown, wants to take us a hundred miles for a shilling by and by. I am much more modest in my demands, and more cautious. I should devote a certain sum to a sinking fund, but I do not press for any special rate or number of years. The whole of the balance, I submit, should be devoted to getting the

maximum of efficiency and convenience out of our national service, even providing the cost of national trams and motors everywhere to supplement the trains. Whether we do these things through the county councils or direct is a mere matter of detail.

The towns themselves will, of course, develop their own suburban services for the assistance of the housing question, but the greatest help we can give to housing will be to disestablish the landlord. Mr. Davies says on this subject that 'cheap facilities go some way towards solving the housing question, for, while it may be true that in some cases reduced fares simply mean increased rents, the landlord or landowner at once appropriating the amount saved, this is not possible when cheap transport facilities are made available over the whole of a country.' But is it nothing that a workman should have to reach his work, after rising at an unnecessarily early hour, hurrying to some overloaded tram or train, and fighting for an uncomfortable place? Cheap transit does *not* solve our labour and housing difficulties in ordinary industry, any more than dropping a miner down a shaft does justice to his case when the face of the coal is far off. Below the surface of even the best transit organisation lies the urgent question of the land itself and the paralysing influence of landlordism.

I may just say here that riding even in a Manchester express is not beneficial to health. To go to the seaside connotes change and fresh air, but the

drawbacks to a long excursion involved in some of our tedious railway passages reduce the benefits materially. A national management in the true sense ought to make the journey itself part of the enjoyment, and this can only be done by practically reserving seats for those who have booked them in advance and refusing to let others turn the coaches into an inferno.

Mr. Cleveland-Stevens, in his 'English Railways' (Routledge), makes some very valuable remarks upon the method of nationalisation, which should be adopted if the policy is decided on. He traces the histories of all the lines in his book, and in the 'Conclusion' says :

Further amalgamations may not unreasonably be expected, and it will naturally follow that if the railways of the country are concentrated in the hands of a still smaller number of companies than at present, their final amalgamation into one state system will appear all the more necessary, perhaps inevitable; moreover, the operation will be the easier to carry out in proportion as the number of companies to be combined under state management decreases. Amalgamation undoubtedly paves the way for nationalisation . . . the vital question so far as England is concerned is this: 'How would the nationalised railways be managed?' or 'What system of nationalisation, if any, is compatible with the sovereignty of Parliament?' If the problem is to be faced in a serious and scientific spirit in this country, it is that

question that should receive the first consideration. . . . A Railway Board with a wide and permanent control might be created, and the possibilities of parliamentary interference rendered as remote and rare as possible, without actually depriving the legislature of its sovereign control:

‘ If we look at the case of the employees in our railway industry we shall find them a very varied people. I do not say that if we became as a nation the direct employers of this large section of the population we should be relieved of a great deal of shame which now attaches to the management; but I do say that it will be a vast relief to large numbers of us to know that we can apply ourselves as a state to the betterment of the conditions under which many of our railway servants live. Mr. Alfred Williams (*‘Life in a Railway Factory,’* Duckworth), who is a forgerman himself, tells us an amazing amount of detail in his own way concerning the makers of our engines and carriages. At the end of one of his chapters, in which he deals with *‘Pinnell of the Yankee Plant,’* he uses these words :

So, eternally tired with the work—he has two forges to attend to, he heats all his own bars, drives his own hammer with the foot, and operates the heavy trimmer by the side of it in the same manner—half-choked and blinded with the reeking smoke and fumes of the oil, sore-footed with using the treadle, his arms blistered and burnt with the scale and hot water from the glands and valves—they are often in bandages—his hands cut and

torn with the sharp ends of the bars, or burned with the hot ones that sometimes shoot out from the die and slip white-hot through his palm and fingers, beaten and distressed with the heat, the gazing-stock of everyone that passes through the shed and who look upon him as a freak and a marvel, he keeps plodding away, a much befooled and overworked individual, the utter victim of a cruel and callous system.

The befooling came about by the management selecting this conscientious worker to test the machinery and fix the scale of pay for piecework. 'The introduction of the Yankee hammers and the oil-furnaces for heating was the beginning of hustle in the shed.' I am not going to begin a long analysis of the management of private concerns, whether they be 'Yankee' in their spirit or not. I am content to make a few generalisations which concern us as a people rather than as budding millionaires. And I say first that we cannot afford to treat men as machinery: 'What's the good of *that thing*,' to quote one of Mr. Williams' illustrations, should never be said of a man. Therefore if we employ a Pinnell to carry out certain of our terribly trying engineering operations, it should be under conditions which provide against his overwork and physical collapse. This involves arrangements which allow for differences among men; but chiefly it calls for a simpler minimum, such as three shifts in the twenty-four hours, and overtime for those only who are strong enough to stand it. How

are we to do this in our larger operations, such as this of railways, unless we take over the management entirely? To rely upon Acts of Parliament in such undertakings is both stupid as a business conception and unjust to those who have the private business to run. The state cannot afford to destroy its workmen: the millionaire can. As a state organisation we shall be able to take account of those lapses in management which Mr. Williams instances. I will not detail them; I will only say that such things are inconceivable in a national undertaking. We should always have some useful member of the state ready to ferret them out and bring them to an end even if they did, as I doubt, ever come to birth. 'The worker is not greatly concerned,' says Mr. Williams, however, 'as to whether he is employed by the state or by a syndicate, as long as he obtains justice.' I submit that he ought to be greatly concerned on such a subject, and should welcome every opportunity which presents itself of working directly for the king. It is only under such service that conditions can be made with a real solicitude for the individual, and for his freedom. In any syndicate it is primarily the profit that causes solicitude, although there are many cases of personal anxiety to put the workers' interest in the forefront of the business. But in our larger and national undertakings it is quite possible to make the conditions of the work an element in the general purpose. Insurance of all kinds then becomes an essential basis of the

programme. Until we have thoroughly explored the needs and possibilities in our national services, we cannot with any prospect of success attempt to legislate for general conditions in all trades. And we need to become accustomed, by means of these larger labours, to the idea of working together in the interests of all, so that such object may in time come to be familiar to us, even in those minor matters where the individual employs workpeople whom he might be tempted to sweat. But I do not wish to delude anyone. I want state service increased with our eyes open : ' all the objectionable features ' of it, as I have said elsewhere, are the very things I wish to bring about. I should like before passing on to my final subject to glance at a few of the differences of character and purpose which arise in state services of different orders.

The employment of citizens is not on a par with the ownership of land. The garden city movement shows us where the difference lies. If the ownership of a little estate of workmen's dwellings lies with the employer in some factory, however desirable the tenure may be in many essential features, the workman is not free. He cannot be free, from the nature of the case. Now, it is desirable that every man working for another man should be free to live where he likes, and move about to and from his work and his house according to circumstances which are not dependent upon his employer's will. The state should, if possible, bring this freedom about. It can only do so in real

simplicity—by which I mean without tiresome laws, which breed disputes—when it directly controls the fundamental things. No human brain could devise conditions by which private ownership of land can be made equally just to landlord and tenant, to capitalist and workman, to the state and the individual. Again, we all take for granted now that the state should control our Navy and Army, though we have only reached this point through strife as to what the state really is: many will absolutely deny that my view of it is the true one. We have not yet quite disposed of the middleman in our Navy shipbuilding, in munitions, and general stores. These questions will need to be considered very seriously by and by. The Army, when we have once again safely shed conscription of the crude kind, will be based upon a principle altogether different from that which has carried us through the past. For we cannot ask every citizen to take his share in turn at the duties of training until we have produced a just scheme for bearing the financial burdens of those who suffer by their patriotism. Those who are too busy or too selfish to take their share must surely pay for those who are not. But whatever else may be done, it is imperative that the services should be placed upon a business footing and not conducted upon their commercial side by experts in the use of howitzers, or ingenious students of strategy, who are sublimely ignorant of the common trade concerns entrusted to them. There are stories told—I wish they were

all myths—which if true prove on the one hand that some citizens look upon the state, even in its life-and-death struggle, as a sheep to be fleeced; and on the other hand, that some representatives of the state consent to, almost insist upon, its being fleeced, so to speak, because they are in posts which are purely business ones, not in any sense military. The science of business has to be learnt just as any other; and I am pleading for the recognition of this fact throughout my little book. Those activities, therefore, in which every citizen participates in one form or other should be run, I contend, by the citizens as a whole under competent managers. Safety having been arranged for as far as is humanly possible through a well-served—these services have always been well-manned—Navy and Army, we come to the question of food, upon which I have dwelt so long. Here the essence of the matter is to be found in the difficulties which inhere in private ownership of land when we attempt to produce from it large bulks of food while retaining on it a large number of workers, the strength of the state. In banking, the personnel is small in comparison with the vast financial interests involved, and the staff of bankers can well take care of itself. To amalgamate once more, and this time with a real Bank of England, will be no loss of status, but the reverse. And it is in the very nature of things—if bankers were angels they could not alter the fact—that money or banking in the hands of a state will go further—it will be more beneficent and social in its

influence—than it can ever be made to do in private hands.

In mining the first question is the due husbanding of our natural wealth, and its fair distribution among the citizens, but involved in it is the dangerous character of the industry, the impressive nature of the scientific issues involved, and the necessity for state oversight throughout. In railways the feature which makes them national is the general as opposed to particular convenience ; the need for facilities in getting about and in moving goods ; and the influence they have upon land values and state interests. The danger to the worker is present here, too, and makes parental state government a necessity if we value our own people. But it will be admitted that the State control of the workers' condition does not here loom so large as in the fighting services and the mines. Yet we may at least grant that this national work should be such that it will tempt our steady and efficient men into it, and provide them all with an honourable career—manager and engineer, furnaceman and smith, signalman, guard, and porter.

If we as a people do these few duties well we shall set the pace as it were for other things, and perchance pick up other duties as we go along. There is one other pleasurable duty, however, which I will now ask the state to undertake at once : to drink as it were its own health.

CHAPTER V

THE PUBLIC-HOUSE

IT has been well and pointedly said by some one that it should not be to the interest of any one person or class to make another person drunk. One might of course apply the same formula to poverty and vanity and other ill-conditions, but no *tu quoque* can neutralise the fact that it is indecent that any personal benefit should accrue to any citizen because another citizen has consumed too much of his beer. As I have said in other directions, the state can afford to consider first the well-being of its members; 'the Trade' cannot. The state, therefore, has at least the right to say: 'I am not prepared so to act, as medical officer and policeman combined, that I will not allow alcohol to be consumed at all; but I will take care that such consumption shall be carried out upon the safest principles, and without any ulterior personal or class object such as profit or gain from intemperance.' There are two temptations which beset the baser sort of publican. He may make his liquor a thirst producer rather than allayer by using inferior or adulterated drink; and he may make the whole atmosphere and

surroundings of his premises so debased that his customers become degraded almost by the very fact of their entrance into them. Publicity of the higher type is an all-important element in any improvement we may desire to bring about ; but there are so many side issues connected with the public-house that I propose to look at it as part of a larger whole.

The essential constituent in the drink which makes 'the drink question' is alcohol. But alcohol is so important in the whole chemical outlook that it has been gravely argued, and equally gravely disputed and denied, that our loss of the dyeing industry might be laid at the door of alcoholic expense. The psychology of the drink habit tells us that, though the pleasant taste (acquired often, no doubt, through pure custom) of alcoholic beverages draws men and women on to consume them and to become intemperate, the intemperance or loss of reason itself, in favour of some dreamland first and nightmare later, ultimately becomes the object of the habit. It therefore happens that even the denaturing of alcohol does not deter all drinkers : for some will use methylated spirit or worse rather than forgo oblivion of their cares and those doubtful pleasures which intoxication is supposed to bring. This alcohol, then, is almost as dangerous a thing as T.N.T. itself, and certainly much more troublesome from the moral point of view ; and it would

be a convenience if it were arranged, as it is in Russia—to which state I shall presently refer—that the Government only should purvey the too much coveted article.

If we had control of the land we should control at the same time the sources of our particular English drink, beer, and of our chief imperial temptation, whisky. And, seeing that we have determined to rebuild our tumbled edifice of chemistry, and the trades which are based upon it, we shall be wise to keep a wary eye on this alcohol question, and grow our barley, hops, potatoes, and if possible beet, upon some well-organised system. Instead, then, of a government tax on the alcohol used as a beverage, the actual sale price could be made to act as a deterrent. But other benefits would result. The more wholesome and less intoxicating forms of beer, pure it is needless to say and free from such cheap fire as maize imparts, could be prepared, and free trade here at least put an end to once for all. A number of purposes for which alcohol is required could be carried through in their earlier stages, without the denaturing which cannot add to their value, if the state itself performed those preliminary treatments before parting with the alcohol contained in the goods. By a few of the larger operations such as this, and the coal distillation to which I have referred, we should have at hand for the prosecution of many chemical operations a large number of the necessary materials

under a state guarantee of quality. To me an active state monopoly employing plenty of educated workers and ministering to hundreds of subordinate trades, is of infinitely greater interest, and, I might say, social beauty, than is an army of revenue spies and agents with their measuring rods and specific gravity tests. But I should always prefer to see a policeman guiding the traffic, or conducting a blind man or a child across the street—Mr. Hall's policeman seems a sort of cross between the functionaries—than conveying a criminal or a drunkard to the station. And I believe that most of us are of the same mind.

I must not, however, enlarge here upon the hop industry and the best barley to grow for beer—we are now to grow less barley and more wheat and oats; upon the chances for beet, which are none unless the state itself takes off its coat to the work; upon the hopes of a real potato once more: the reader of the present day knows only too well that we have much leeway to make up, and that it will require a united effort, a state application of energy, to bring about the condition of things which is required. Germany has driven this into us by howitzers and poisonous gas, and we must now build up for ourselves a strong economic empire even in the cause of peace.

But if I were to become enthusiastic in connection with beverages I should be so far a traitor to British institutions as to prefer, next to total

abstinence, Omar's jug of wine, or in more exact detail a small bottle of something let us say from 'somewhere in (the south of) France.' I am not going to discuss these: Château Margaux itself may not be the idol of the hour; I am ignorant; I come to bury drinking, not to praise it. Perhaps Australia will some day send us something just as good, named Anzac, if there are any non-abstainers left to drink it; but in the meantime what are we to do with our ports and sherries, burgundies and—dare I say it—hocks? Would it not be a decided gain if here, too, we stopped free trade and let the governments concerned agree upon the stocks to change hands? We all know that wines are manufactured at times from strange grapes, and we all know, of course, of just one real shipper of genuine wines. But, not to put the matter too personally, there are very few among us who know a good wine from a bad one; and it would be a public benefit if this demand, which enables free trade to rob the dyeing vat in order to supply spurious wine, were met in a safer manner by the respective governments contracting together for the real thing alone. But might not the tender of a bad vintage lead to war, or the withholding of a good one break a treaty? However, if the state should own our public-houses in the future it will be necessary for the wines as well as the beers and spirits to be under its care until the demand itself shall cease.

For if the first result of state intervention and control should be purity in the liquors sold, it will follow inevitably that there will be a vast decrease in drunkenness from that cause alone. The next plank in a national drink platform will be to arrange the premises in such a way that they become comfortable places for *bona fide* meals, and not mere drinking dens. The temptation should in them be rather towards foods and non-alcoholic drinks—tea, coffee, and cocoa, lemonades and lime-juice—than towards alcohol alone. In ‘the honest ale-house,’ with lavender in the window and lavender-smelling sheets upon the beds in Izaak Walton’s days, they drank ‘barley wine, the good liquor that our honest forefathers did use to drink of; the drink which preserved their health, and made them live so long, and do so many good deeds.’ I am quite sure that the author of the ‘Compleat Angler’ believed what he here set down, and I fear that very large numbers among us still believe in the much less innocent barley wine of the present day. The only way therefore to be just to all is to take this matter up as a state, eliminate all the grosser dangers of it, and endeavour to educate people, as the medical men are doing nobly, while studying still further the commercial and chemical question of alcohol.

The Russian case is not quite our own, though there is an immense amount to be learnt from the heroic conduct of our great ally. In Mr. Simpson’s

‘ The Self Discovery of Russia ’ (Constable) there are numerous reports from the managers of factories and others bearing on the effect which the interdiction of vodka has had. I will quote just one of these reports :

While sending you our investigation papers with statistics of the harm drink does to industry, we would likewise call your attention to the extent of the evil of intemperance as seen in the life of workmen, namely, the awful sufferings of their families. . . . The material well-being of the workman has improved considerably, but the greatest difference is felt in the home life. Formerly in the days of intemperance 80 per cent. of the workmen looked dazed, and went about in a kind of stupor. Constant drinking had a bad influence on their moral character : their homes lost all homeliness, and were turned into centres of infection and misery. We could point out instances where the parents carried off everything to the public-house. This great scourge was felt most by the children. These poor little things were crowded together in damp houses underground, whilst starvation and other unfavourable circumstances made them grow up into weak, delicate, and prematurely embittered men and women. Now many workers have been able to add to their home comforts : their fuller earnings enable them to take better rooms, and to buy better food and clothing.

In a special physicians’ report there are some very curious facts. We can understand that arrests

for drunkenness, when there was supposed to be no vodka, should decline from 917 in one district to 31, but the deaths from alcoholic poisoning fell in one hospital not more than from 52 to 36; and we have to ask where the poison was obtained.

The anomaly [says Mr. Simpson] is, of course, explained by the character of the substitutes used. Kvass, with its $\frac{1}{2}$ per cent. of alcohol, was mixed with methylated spirits, or the latter were swallowed 'neat.' Now, while vodka has 40 per cent. of alcohol (and in 1910 some three million vedros (2.7 gallons) of vodka were consumed in Petrograd alone), this 'denatured' spirit has an alcohol percentage of 93.

So the sale of these denatured spirits has now to be controlled. We have therefore to take note of the terrible fact that when once a human being has developed a craving for alcohol, it becomes so maddened by the lack of it that anything which approaches in effect to the desired drink, however deleterious or poisonous, is eagerly consumed. When are we going to place ourselves in a position as a state to take charge not only of the poisonous vehicle but of the patients themselves with a view to a national cure?

To quote again :

Professor Bekhteriev notices a general diminution in insanity, criminal cases, and prostitution, and a Court physician reports that cases of insanity have markedly diminished during the war. . . . From

one little village known to me the annual revenue from vodka was 80,000 rubles. When the peasants under the statute of March, 1914, received again the power of local option, the decision was taken to have the shop closed. Nobody opposed the decision, because in their hearts the peasants seemed to understand that vodka was a bad thing, and that they really did not need it ; in the words of one of them, it was 'just a way of being happy.' It only requires to be added that almost everything remains to be done by the Zemstvos and other local bodies to provide other saner 'ways of being happy,' particularly in view of any possible temporary reaction after the war.

In England the attitude of medical science towards 'stimulants' has undergone a great change in recent years. The use of rum, however, in the Army seems to indicate that none of us should take up an extreme position, but should quietly inculcate the virtues of temperance, and leave the leaven of medical advice to work. Towards that large section among us which still takes too much alcohol, even in defiance of the doctor's orders, state control of the sale would be an untold benefit. It would, as I have said, at once kill the infamous purveying of deleterious drinks, and by that act alone would restore to many of us a more healthy appetite. The decent surroundings of a state-managed inn or public-house would still further improve matters by restoring self-respect. Here, as in farming, the state would leave much alone ; that large number

of charming inns which are scattered about would go on with little change. But the state management would endeavour first to bring all of the houses up to the level of the best, and act in them all in such a manner that the more excellent way of temperance would always be presented in an attractive shape. While making the 'alehouse' something more than the name implies, the state could at the same time take more particular notice of those too-constant callers, who were in reality medical cases. And as time went on and experience ripened, the dread spectre of drunkenness might come to be not so much as named among us. The interference of the state during the war has already shown how much can be done to limit excess, and the king's noble example must have proved to many how unnecessary the habit of drinking alcohol is, even in hospitality. May we not, then, take courage to buy out 'the trade,' and with infinite wisdom and patience set to work to wean ourselves from drink?

CHAPTER VI

THE STATE

I do not wish to attempt any analysis of other states, their ideals of citizenship and organisation, their loyalties or their conscientious efforts towards what they consider freedom. I do not even claim a knowledge of the inner aspirations of the Celt and the Gael: I can do no more than recognise with intense gratitude the generous way in which a union, brought about perhaps by indifferent methods, has been on the whole accepted. And the very least that England can do is to reciprocate by encouraging in every way the happy development of racial ideals and Home Rule for all.

But to Englishmen I may speak frankly throughout. We have two fundamental articles in our political creed which explain much of our conduct throughout history. We stick resolutely to our monarchy as the most convenient arrangement which a people can have, and we are convinced that our constitution raises, not lowers, the dignity of the occupant of the throne. The king himself only can know what the birthright of an English king means. But we are happy to believe

that our affection carries him through the anxieties and the labours of his office (‘ Love is a present for a mightie king ’) ; and it is our profound conviction that in his personality is represented the whole living organism of the state—England, and thence the Empire—down to its smallest, weakest unit.

The second fundamental article in an Englishman’s creed is that the king’s honour and the Empire’s is in each separate citizen’s keeping down even to that smallest unit. It has often happened that the mere force of circumstances has placed the keeping of this honour in very lonely, and even feeble, hands without disgrace. But we may sometimes be apt to forget that the lonely separate units, even in a vast constituency at home, have equally their duties towards the state—duties which cannot be discharged by the most vigorous shouting with the largest crowd. We do indeed govern by the votes of the largest crowd. But this very fact should make us all the more careful to remember that no majority can take away from us the duty of voting according to our conscience, kept very specially and truly wide-awake. And such government by majority has always been preserved by Englishmen for the sacred purpose of improving the conditions of all, not for the selfish one of personal profit. It is undeniable, and I can appeal to nothing more fixed and certain in an Englishman’s political character and creed than to this fact, that he dislikes and abominates the suggestion that his legislative measures are directed to personal

good rather than to the general amelioration of the conditions of the state as a whole. The great body of the people, even if our individual policies may sometimes be mistaken, is the entity which we all in our different ways set out to serve.

When Mr. Hall, therefore, speaks of the desire of the landowners to preserve 'their leadership,' he does not imply, any more than I do, a policy which is unworthy in itself of the class concerned. This makes me all the more anxious to appeal to it to adapt that leadership to the times, or to the necessities of the times. I think that I have shown that the mere rôle of 'landed gentry,' without any reflection upon those who play the part, has become an anachronism, and that it is now imperative that the state itself, because of the warring interests concerned, should take charge of many of our hitherto privately conducted undertakings and industries. The feudal system was always an organisation for war, never an agrarian settlement. To feed and keep in readiness the potential warrior was the ideal of the former : to provide a prize for a few veterans as in Rome seems to be the best which the ancient system can suggest now. The very safety of that English people about whom I am specially speaking now is concerned in a prompt and thorough acceptance of new conditions. But landed gentry are required with a new inspiration, and new leadership is required in this new system which waits to be installed. No homestead in the counties need be disturbed if the occupants will

fall into line and contribute the necessary quota from its acres to the general fund at the depot. And the men and women as leaders will be required more than ever, and equipped with the best education to be procured, to manage for the state through the counties the various matters of business involved.

The buying out of the landlords will, on the financial side, be a distinct benefit to many of them. Free trade and the feudal baron have never loved each other much, nor have their interests agreed. The occupations of the people have outgrown the lord's permit and the common of arable and pasture: their ships have traversed every sea, and have brought home food in exchange for their wares. It began to be feared that the pheasant and the hare, even the fox, were of more importance to the landlord than food itself and the comfort of the worker. In war, enclosures were made which still further desolated the homes of the peasant, who escaped as often as he could from what had become a dreary lot. And even now in this distressing war the old attempts are being made. Free trade was blamed before, and is being blamed again. But the spectacle of feudalism looking with dislike upon the people well fed has been one which the Englishman has never liked, and has always longed to end. The people and the barons have now been fighting side by side to avert extinction equally. The very poetry of the position cries out for a new national life. But to buy the landlord out piecemeal is to risk the success of complete farming:

the things which are essential will serve the whole as easily as they will a colony or an industrial farm, and nothing but the whole will take cheap and good English-grown food to the poor in the towns. I have not broached the subject of the absentee, but it adds its serious weight to my side of the scale.

When the land question is settled in a simple way it will make finance easier all round, and national banking will become an almost miraculous solution of many state difficulties. The mineral riches of the land will be obtainable with less risk, and can then be applied more directly to benefit the state. Railways can be run more cheaply, and to afford more convenience if they are publicly owned. And supplementing all these greater organisations we could live more decently and soberly in our coming generations if, as a state anxious for the best, we became responsible for the public-house.

With these state labours well in hand we might very largely, for the rest and for the present, leave our old friend Free Trade alone. I have tried to show as I went along the points at which this great national secret of success touched upon the larger interests of the state. In my own opinion, when once we have recognised the real duties of a state as guided by English ideals—the best service of all—Free Trade will be needed more than ever to keep the people active and useful in all quarters of the globe.

We have this year been celebrating our best beloved, the poet William Shakespeare. We are

sometimes at a loss to know why one who seemed an ordinary mortal in his own day should grow in grandeur with the lapse of time. Beside the lake we note the cattle in the sloping fields and the woods behind, but we are unconscious of the summit under which we stand. But, pushing out upon the water, as Wordsworth tells us :

‘ a huge peak,
As if with voluntary power instinct
Uprears its head . . .
And growing still in stature the grim shape
Towers up between us and the stars.’

So the gentle figure of our loved one only reaches his full grandeur after the lapse of time has enabled us to see him as he is, towering above the rest.

Haud aliter ; we ourselves are standing in the foreground, and most of us upon the lower slopes. We are all too intent, anxious, and busy to discern the full meaning and importance of our work and effort at this dire crisis in our national life. We can only hope that when the centuries look back they will see unmistakably the massive figure of a state which was prepared to dare the worst for right. I, in my humble faith in my own people, hope that the complete distant view of the England of this age will reveal the birth of a new social organism, 'knit together by closer ties of mutual consideration, firm-based upon a happy freedom, and rising through degrees of varied talent to its crest, the king.

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THE STATE AS FARMER

BY

George Radford, M.A.

Editor of "Our Land."

This little book, as was to be expected, has made some people very cross. The "NEW WITNESS" speaks of "impudent books written by men who, as in the case of Mr. Radford, know nothing of chemistry, nothing of bacteriology, nothing much of any mortal thing, and certainly nothing whatsoever of such immortal things as liberty and the love of it, modesty, and the curse there is upon such as utter, with their lips or pens, words unadvisedly."

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THE STATE AS FARMER

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And the "WESTMINSTER GAZETTE" this :—" It is well that owners and farmers should know the thoughts over which countless minds are brooding in these unsettled days, and we rather think that they will be surprised to find how much there is in this booklet with which upon reflection they must even cordially agree. As for those whose acquaintance at first hand with the problems of the land is but small, we venture to believe that they will lay it down with a wish to know more."

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THE STATE AS FARMER

The "JOURNAL OF THE CHAMBER OF AGRICULTURE," though rejecting the main contention of the book, makes this admission :—"There is one point, repeatedly made in this book, with which we shall all agree, and that is that the bad farmer, or the slave driver, has no right to exist as a farmer. He is a disgrace to his class, and the country ought not to be saddled with the cost of keeping him."

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THE STATE AS FARMER

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